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SCOTTISH STUDIES

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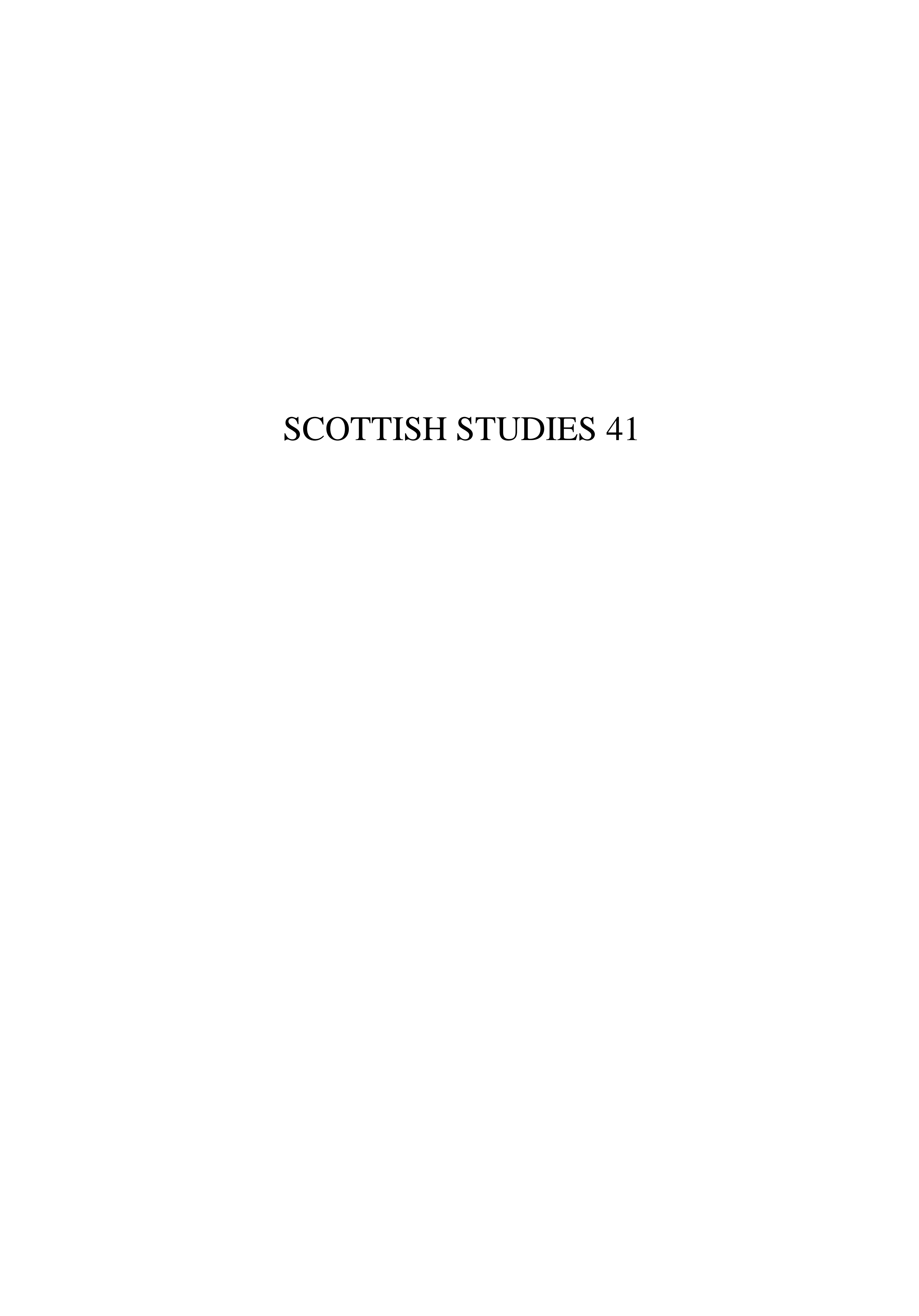

SCOTTISH STUDIES 41

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About the journal

First published in 1957, *Scottish Studies* has striven to reflect the mission of the University of Edinburgh's School of Scottish Studies, founded in 1951 to preserve and explore Scotland's rich and diverse cultural and linguistic heritage. Research topics have included archaeology and pre-history; demographics; ethnography and ethnology; history; land use and distribution; fishing and seafaring; material culture; onomastics; oral culture and traditions; and spiritual beliefs, customs and observances. Today, in addition to these topics, we welcome research centering on Scotland's evolving landscapes, physical and social, and the peoples who call Scotland home in the twenty-first century.

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Reviews are normally commissioned, but we welcome readers' suggestions of works that they would like to see reviewed.

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Editor's Note

After spending several months of 2024 scanning volumes 1–33 of *Scottish Studies*, I became newly aware of how much territory the journal has covered since its founding in 1957. With this volume, contributors continue to delve into familiar research themes and to explore new ones.

Scottish historians have long found an outlet for their research in *Scottish Studies*. Professor Ewen Cameron's article in this volume examines the life and legacy of John M. Bannerman, Lord Bannerman of Kildonan, Scottish rugby international, champion of Gaelic and of the Highlands, proponent of Scottish Home Rule, and mainstay of the Scottish Liberal Party during its darkest days in the 1930s and 1940s. Dr Sheila Kidd also considers Highland history in her study of a song by a previously unknown nineteenth-century poet, Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir, which bears witness to her community's emotional upheaval upon learning that they were to be 'cleared' from the estate of Alexander Campbell of Monzie, Barbreck, Lochaweside, in 1840.

The School of Scottish Studies itself has long provided food for discussion in our pages – but rarely has one of the School's own staff been a subject of enquiry. In this volume, Liam Alastair Crouse examines the life and career of one of the institution's most gifted and diligent collectors, the late Ian Paterson (1916–1990) of Berneray, Harris. Complementing Crouse's paper, we also publish a review of Susanne Barding's monumental study of Berneray in the early 1970s, *Beàrnaraidh na Hearadh: 'Tis Fifty Years Since – A Study of Life in a Hebridean Island community.*

Sport has surely merited more space in the journal, given how large it looms in Scotland's cultural life. A step in the right direction is Trevor Hill's paper, which examines the evolving relationship between traditional forms of wrestling popular on 'both sides of the Tweed', and shows how definitions of style and regional identity have come to distinguish Scottish Backhold from Cumberland and Westmoreland Wrestling, despite many functional similarities between them.

Finally, we are particularly pleased to publish a major article by the late Frans Buisman (1942–2002). A prodigious linguist and highly-regarded scholar of the piping repertoire, Buisman submitted his paper shortly before his untimely death; but because of the article's complexity and its author's unavailability to answer questions, the manuscript remained in limbo, making its way through the hands of several reviewers, not all of whom agreed about what he wanted to say. We are therefore hugely grateful to Professor Joshua Dickson of the Royal Scottish Conservatoire, whose careful editing has at last made it possible to publish this important work, in which Buisman shows how the phonological features of the Gaelic language shaped the 'language' of canntaireachd so that it could guide pipers in realising the music's 'expressive variability'.

With a regular publication schedule, we can now publish timely reviews of significant works before they fall out of print. In one of two review articles, Jane Pettegree assesses Fred Freeman's CD compendium *The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill*, completed last year to mark the 250th anniversary of the poet's birth. In the other, we provide a generalist's view of Ronald Black and Christopher Dracup's *John Dewar's Islay, Jura and Colonsay,* the first of a projected series of ten volumes from the Dewar manuscripts. Other reviews assess collections of poetry, song and narrative; consider studies of the Gaelic revival, of Scotland's 'little ice age', and of music-making among the Australian diaspora; and describe the National Galleries of Scotland's 2024 exhibition *Before and After Coal,* which marked forty years since the closure of Scotland's coal mines and the transformation of their communities.

We had hoped by now to have announced the publication online of all of the earlier volumes of *Scottish Studies*. These are now in the hands of our publisher, Edinburgh Diamond, who say they should be available before too much longer. Meanwhile, we have prepared a comprehensive Index of volumes 1–40. Please get in touch if you would like a copy.

VIRGINIA BLANKENHORN
Editor, *Scottish Studies*
20 January 2025

Pipers' Canntaireachd and Scottish Gaelic: Basic elements and expressive variability

FRANS BUISMAN

EDITOR'S NOTE

Frans Buisman (1942–2002) was a Dutch linguist, archivist and voracious scholar of pibroch, the classical music of the Scottish Highland bagpipe, and its earliest printed sources. His research into piping and Scottish Gaelic music spanned thirty years of his life, culminating in 2001 with the publication of *The MacArthur-MacGregor manuscript of piobaireachd (1820): The Music of Scotland, Volume 1* (Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen). Such was Buisman's drive that, despite consistent dissemination of his research in journals and symposia, much of his work remains unpublished; it is with pleasure therefore that *Scottish Studies* now presents one of the last papers Buisman produced before his untimely passing. No one, before or since, has brought such depth of expertise in linguistics and phonology to the study of pibroch's vocabelisation and verbal notation, making the present paper a work of singular importance and a fitting tribute to Buisman's zeal and unique erudition.

This paper has gone through many hands since Buisman submitted it in 2001. Our thanks go to those who have reviewed the work and offered invaluable input, including this journal's previous editor, Dr John Shaw; the late Dr Roderick D. Cannon, emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of East Anglia and renowned authority on bagpipe music; Dr Tiber Falzett, piper and folklore lecturer at University College Dublin; and Buisman's friend and colleague Barnaby Brown, University of Cambridge, who played the pipes at the author's funeral. Above all, our sincere gratitude to Prof. Joshua Dickson, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, who has reviewed previous comments and overseen a complete re-editing of this article for publication. Thanks to the efforts of all of these, this work can at last serve as a memorial to an important scholar of Scotland's national music.

Abstract

Canntaireachd is an orally-devised method used by pipers to remember pibroch (*pìobaireachd*) compositions, the classical repertoire of the highland bagpipes, and to transmit the music to others. Canntaireachd began to be fixed in print from the early nineteenth century, but unlike tonic solfa and staff notation, the primary purpose of canntaireachd was not the recording of melody. Indeed, it was never intended as a written medium at all, but rather as a means of orally encoding a variety of stylistic features in the context of a tune, thereby providing an aural road-map for performers already familiar with the musical idiom. Based on the sounds of the language spoken by early Highland pipers – Gaelic – and thus subject to that language's dialectal variability, canntaireachd nonetheless has its own syntax and obeys its own semantic rules. In this article, the author explores the relationship between canntaireachd and the Gaelic language, and describes how canntaireachd as an oral medium is able to distinguish, in an ad hoc manner, agogic features and other details not normally differentiated when canntaireachd is written down – highlighting, in effect, the sung method's 'expressive variability'.

1.0 Scope

The Gaelic word *canntaireachd* (literally 'reciting', 'singing'), in its broadest sense, denotes techniques of vocalising instrumental music; that is, of giving a rendition of any music by means of singing expressive words or syllables. The traditional music of both Highland and Lowland Scotland has a rich variety of vocalising devices; in the former, the term canntaireachd prior to the mid-19th century seems to have been used to denote a variety of vocalisations, from 'doggerel verse' to syllables 'that meant nothing and could be made up as one went along'.[1] But canntaireachd as a technical term nowadays refers almost exclusively to one kind: the formalized, non-lexical 'vocabelising' that is used by pipers for expressing pibroch, a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century class of ceremonial music that was composed for the Highland bagpipes; and so in this paper the term 'pipers' canntaireachd' will be used in that specific context.[2]

The present paper deals with the way pipers' canntaireachd works, and analyses correspondences between speech sounds and musical meaning. It contains a description of the extent to which canntaireachd associated with pibroch was formalised in print in this respect, and outlines the ways in which canntaireachd reflects aspects of Scottish Gaelic phonology. Differences will also be shown, pointing out that, in these formalisations, phonetic oppositions as observed in Scottish Gaelic are often neutralised. At the same time it is demonstrated how, nevertheless, phonetic oppositions could be borrowed temporarily from language to make ad hoc differentiations in canntaireachd.

2.0 Sources

Our sources are the records in the Sound Archives of the School of Scottish Studies (hereinafter abbreviated in tables or figures as SA); the canntaireachd of John MacCrimmon (*Iain Dubh*, c. 1730-1822, abbreviated as MC) as notated by Niel MacLeod of Gesto, likely around the year 1800; the 'Specimens of Canntaireachd' (SP) as copied by Angus Mackay in approximately 1853; an anonymous source (AN) quoted by the Revd. Alexander MacGregor in 1872; a few letters and articles written by pipers in the first decades of the twentieth century; and the manuscripts of Colin Campbell (CC) begun in 1797 (but whose first draft is lost).

Much of what will be said in the next few sections will stress the importance of recognising canntaireachd as a purely oral technique. It does not mean that we must limit ourselves to sound records. In fact, the Gesto record (MC) arguably provides us with the most important data. This paper contends that modern piping institutions have neglected oral tradition when disseminating their use of Colin Campbell's adapted system of written canntaireachd, and that a critical comparative study of these written sources reveals a considerable amount of evidence regarding the particulars of the oral transmission that underlie them and, in the case of the Campbell canntaireachd manuscripts, of the oral system that underlies the scribal adaptations characteristic of his collection.[3]

3.0 Bagpipe music – technique and notation

The scale of the Highland bagpipe encompasses nine notes, running from what pipers call 'low G' to 'high A'; the tenor drones are pitched one octave below 'low A', and the bass drone is pitched an octave lower still. In our music examples we have omitted the drones, as is usual in pipe notation, but

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[1] George Moss, 'Canntaireachd', *Piping Times* 12/1 (1959): 16–17.

[2] The Gaelic word *pìobaireachd* technically can refer to any genre of piping, but has come to be most commonly associated in English-language contexts with the ceremonial genre. For that reason, in the present English-language context of this paper, the word 'pibroch' is preferred instead of *pìobaireachd* to reflect this association. Similarly, the word canntaireachd (unitalicised) is preferred to *canntaireachd* to reinforce present-day, English-language association of the term among pipers specifically with the vocabelising of pibroch.

[3] Frans Buisman, 'From chant to script: some evidence of chronology in Colin Campbell's adaptation of canntaireachd', *Piping Times* 39/7 (1987): 44–49; 'More evidence of Colin Campbell and the development of the Campbell notation', *Piping Times* 47/11 (1995): 21–28 and *Piping Times* 47/12 (1995): 26–34; and 'Canntaireachd and Colin Campbell's verbal notation – an outline', *Piping Times* 50/3 (1997): 24–30 and *Piping Times* 50/4 (1998): 28–33.

they must be understood throughout. The notes C and F are sharp, and the respective sharp signs (#) are written on the stave in all examples containing these notes.

In respect of the notes which modem pipers call 'grace-notes' certain distinctions must be made, and my present notation reflects these, as follows. To articulate successive notes of the same pitch, and for some purposes of emphasis, extremely short notes are inserted which I call here *pseudo-notes*; these are necessary because the sound of the instrument cannot be stopped, and the volume cannot be altered. They are made with infinitesimally short flicks or strikes of the fingers, and do not sound as proper notes. In conventional pipe music they are written as ordinary notes with small heads and three tails. In this work, however, I distinguish them as *cuts*, when they are pitched higher than the true notes which precede and follow them, and *strikes* when they are lower; and I write them with the signs **(')** and **(,)** respectively, placed on the stave at the appropriate pitch height.

Table 1. Use of consonants in the middle of vocables, as found in written sources.

In the present notation I use notes with small heads and two tails for certain other notes which are parts of larger clusters (symbolised **dr**), and for true grace-notes, where these occur, as discussed later. I also use the symbol **x** at the pitch level E to denote an *introduction* which is a descending sequence of short notes featuring a relatively long E.

Table 1 shows various scribal presentations of canntaireachd vocables. It is not meant to be a complete overview, but it illustrates a number of those aspects that are described in this paper. At first sight, considerable differences appear between the various sources; but by showing the phonological structure of the system, this paper will make clear that many differences are merely superficial. As far as we encounter real differences, especially in the canntaireachd of John MacCrimmon (MC) and in Angus MacKay's 'Specimens' (SP), some of them do not really affect the system itself but are evidence of a wider application of a phenomenon that I call *expressive variability*.

By the term expressive variability, I denote the procedure of substituting sounds in canntaireachd with the aim of differentiating, in an ad hoc manner, details that normally are not differentiated systematically. Such substitutions go beyond the kind of changes that may result from phonetic context. Expressive variability is discernible in some sound recordings of canntaireachd relating to pibroch as collected by researchers at the School of Scottish Studies.[4] It is not to be seen in the adapted canntaireachd of Colin Campbell, but it is obvious in John MacCrimmon's canntaireachd as recorded in print by Gesto and, to a lesser extent, in MacKay's 'Specimens', where it is applied to both vowels and consonants (*Table 1*).

Apart from the PhD thesis by Kim Chambers, the main value of which lies in its treatment of other instrumentalists' vocabelising, pipers' canntaireachd has not been subjected to a study in which linguistic and musicological aspects are viewed together.[5] Discourses on canntaireachd are often seriously hampered by overreliance on the Campbell Canntaireachd, and by taking Campbell's system as the norm from which to view other sources. One must understand that Campbell did not give his own canntaireachd in its original form, but had adapted it to make it suitable as a system of graphic notation. Some writers have, however, looked in a purely mechanical way at the congruencies between musical meaning and vocable or syllable; this attitude betrays itself by the frequent use of the term 'pipers' solfa' as a characterisation of canntaireachd.[6] But unlike the abstract syllables of the various solfa systems that are found worldwide, there is a direct relationship between a syllable's phonetic shape in canntaireachd and its musical meaning.

4.0 Musical transmission and communication

As musicians, we find that a theory of music and appropriate terminology help us communicate with each other. In addition, more or less abstract forms of music enable us to reflect on music and to disclose something about it in a musical form. Playing a fragment of music as a kind of illustration may be called the most direct form of communicating or reflecting on music. The most abstract form is the use of notational systems like the stave. Hardly less abstract are systems of verbal solmization.

Another form of musical abstraction is an oral technique by which instrumental music is translated into expressive words or syllables. Such an imitation may serve several purposes: it may be used as a mnemonic device, as a vehicle of communication, and sometimes as a medium of performance. One manifestation of instrumental music's vocalisation as a medium of performance in

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[4] E.g. the singing of pibrochs by piper Calum Johnston and a detailed discussion of Calum's 'expressive variability' relating to specific notes on the bagpipe scale between Calum and researchers Francis Collinson and Robin Lorimer. School of Scottish Studies Sound Archives, SA 1964.145, and SA1964.146. (Many of these recordings are now available online; see under 'Johnston, Calum' in references below. –Ed.)

[5] Christine Knox Chambers, 'Non-lexical vocables in Scottish traditional music' (Phd diss., University of Edinburgh, 1980).

[6] See, for example, J. P. Grant, 'Canntaireachd: the old pipers' notation for pibroch music', *Music and Letters* 6 (1925): 54–63. This is a typical example of how one may be led down the wrong path by expecting canntaireachd to express distinctions in the same way as solfa systems do.

Scottish Gaelic tradition is *puirt-à-beul* ('tunes from the mouth' or 'mouth music'), in which words are set to tunes and sung for the purpose of rhythmic accompaniment to traditional dances. In this manner, *puirt-à-beul* serves, among other things, as a vehicle of expressing the agogic dimensions of instrumental music. Similarly, a highly expressive form of pipers' canntaireachd is associated with the light music tradition of Highland piping – for example, in the singing of Mary Morrison, Barra.[7] Such singing acquires thereby the nature of an independent performance, disregarding the vocalisation's role as a method of transmitting something else: that is, as a way of illustrating particulars of a performance as it may be executed on the instrument.

A certain degree of formalisation may occur in vocabelising because of the need to be specific on certain occasions; pipers' canntaireachd distinguishes itself in that respect by a greater formal regularity in the relationship between sound and meaning. But it should be stressed that formal regularity does not diminish the imitative nature of the technique. Formalisation is not absolute: the system still derives its effectiveness from the principle of *phonaesthetic association*—the meaning of speech sounds as applied in canntaireachd being recognised by association with musical sounds.

The more articulate forms of imitative singing basically express in their phonetic structure only those musical elements considered relevant to retention or transmission. 'Relevant' in this matter does not mean musically more or less important than other elements, but relevant in respect of the musical choices made in cases where several choices are possible. Even distinguishing melody notes from each other in a precise way was clearly thought to be of less relevance – again, without implying that the notes themselves are irrelevant (an example of this will be given in the next section). All vocabelising is focused on those elements that are considered to be essential for a systematic transmission of the music.

4.1 Orally transmitted learning

In a 1924 letter to the *Oban Times*, piper Malcolm MacInnes described pipers' canntaireachd as a 'mimic chant'; in a 1920 letter, he had explained that 'each vocable roughly represents in its sound the sound produced on the chanter'.[8] In both observations, MacInnes demonstrates his precise understanding of how canntaireacht communicates the elements essential to a piper's retention and communication of the music.

Other descriptions have been less to the point than MacInnes's. Too many authors miss the point about the nature of pipers' canntaireachd entirely, describing it as a kind of solfa, thereby overlooking basic differences between solfa as a scribal (and reading) method, and canntaireachd as an oral method of transmission (or instruction). What pipers call a 'double beat' motif on E is shown here to illustrate the difference between canntaireachd as an expressive imitation of instrumental music and a mechanistic solfa approach (*Fig. 1*):

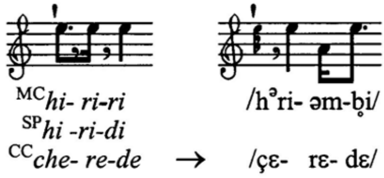

Fig 1. 'Double beat' motif on E

On the left, we see how the double beat, or *crathadh*, was represented in piping's earliest printed sources. The vocables used in Campbell (CC), Gesto (MC), and MacKay (SP) express this way of playing perfectly. At some stage, however, double beats came to be played predominantly as shown to the right, with the first note reduced and with compensatory lengthening of the second strike (,). Later sources express the double beat on E by inserting another vowel or a vocalised nasal as a regular

[7] Mary Morrison, 'Mouth music and canntaireachd'. *Scottish Tradition* 2: *Music from the Western Isles*, Greentrax CDTRAX9002, 1992, compact disc.

[8] Malcolm MacInnes, letters to the *Oban Times*, 13 July 1920 and 16 August 1924.

expression of low A.[9] But an incongruence has developed: the modern piper, reading Campbell's *cherede* and knowing that it represents the double beat on E, sings the motif in imitation of modern performance style, pronounced as shown on the right of Figure 1; a vocalisation of the lengthening of the second strike is inserted between *re* and *de*; and so the simple syllable *de*, which normally expresses E preceded by a single strike in this motif, is now interpreted to mean something else.[10] Such dissonance betrays a breakdown in the expressive relationship between speech sound and musical meaning.

We must not regard these early written forms of canntaireachd as representing a fixed, 'pure' or 'original' standard to which later oral records merely add evidence of a process of erosion. Even Kim Chambers' valuable thesis at times seems to accept the view that writing naturally presents something close to a fixed standard that in due course falls victim to the 'creeping in' of expressive nuance:

> Since it is written down, manuscript *canntaireachd* must be considered to be as 'congealed' as any vocables can be, but when *canntaireachd* is sung it tends almost invariably to become less systematic than in its written form as idiosyncratic vocables and musically expressive nuances creep in.[11]

The same author affirmed the essential nature of canntaireachd elsewhere:

> It is considered to be essential that the *canntaireachd* be sung. [...] Written *canntaireachd* is useful to remind one of a tune once learned and then forgotten, but it cannot, unaided, pass on a 'meaningful' interpretation; or such is the view of most pipers using *canntaireachd* today.[12]

The problem with regarding 'manuscript' canntaireachd as the norm may be further appreciated from the example of the *Criùnnludh Geàrr* variation of *Ceann na Drochaide Bige* ('The End of the Little Bridge') as it is recorded in MacLeod of Gesto's book (tune no. 12). This is presented as a sixteen-fold repetition of the vocable *hientiriri*. It can only be interpreted as expressing an alternation of low As and low Gs; both notes are regularly expressed as *hien-*, but the difference can only be heard in the sung form of canntaireachd. The printed transcription of the vocables gives no clue at all which of the possible schemes of alternation is meant (*Fig. 2*):

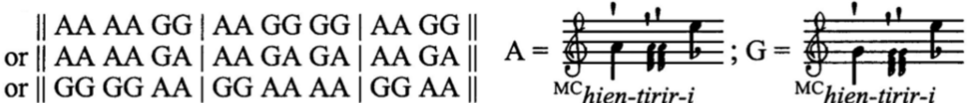

Fig 2. Possible schemes of alternation between low A and low G in the *Criùnnludh Geàrr* variation of 'The End of the Little Bridge'.

In a culture that relies on oral transmission, the lack of widespread literacy in the verbal and musical arts was compensated for by 'precision in oral retention', to paraphrase James Ross, which, naturally, is impossible without a great amount of expert knowledge:

[9] E.g. the singing of William MacLean, School of Scottish Studies Sound Archives, SA 1953/4/B7. (Buisman's source for this item is not listed in Tobar an Dualchais, but see references for similar recordings. –Ed.)
[10] E.g. the singing of Andrew Wright, 'Canntaireachd and Piobaireachd: Singing of Ground with Piping Exposition', Northern Ireland Piping and Drumming School, *Whispers of the Past* 1, n.d. Compact disc.
[11] Chambers, 'Non-lexical vocables', 11–12.
[12] Kim Chambers, 'Concepts of canntaireachd: an analytical evaluation of Scots pipers' perceptions of their solmisation system', in *Studies in Traditional Music and Dance: Proceedings of the 1980 Conference of the United Kingdom National Committee of the International Folk Music Council*, ed. Peter Cooke (IFMC Committee, 1981), 23.

> The literary in Gaelic tradition may be said to be based on a scientific attitude to oral transmission rather than on the written word. In a society in which for a considerable period the most detailed subtleties of bardic metrics and the complexities of canntaireachd notation depended in practice upon absolute precision in retention and subsequent delivery, this scientific attitude was a necessity.[13]

Precise retention is possible only if there is a great deal of inherent formulaic structure in the texts – ideally applied in such a creative way that it does not stop capturing the mind. The same internal formulaic consistency and similar spheres of knowledge relating to it are required in the domain of instrumental music. But here the situation is somewhat more complicated because, unlike the rehearsal of a poetic text, which uses the same tools as during a proper recitation, rehearsal of an instrumental work may be possible using some sort of substitute for the instrument itself – potentially, an external technique such as vocabelising.

When interpreting techniques of retention within an oral culture as a sign of literacy, we would be wrong to assume that oral tools of transmission and retention are concerned with the same particulars as scribal tools of transmission, such as staff notation, or that they convey basically the same thing, only to a different degree. Because of its greater communicative directness and because of its greater flexibility, pipers' canntaireachd is in many respects less laborious than staff notation. But it is not a substitute for it: in some respects, one mode of transmission works more efficiently, and in other respects it may be the other way round.

All the same, pipers' canntaireachd, to fulfil its purpose, must necessarily have been embedded in the theory of pibroch at one time. The way it represents music cannot be understood without a minimum knowledge of the principles of pibroch ornamentation. Indeed, the relationship between canntaireachd and theory is so close that, to those who are familiar with the various types of melodic figures that are used in pibroch, every type is easily recognisable, provided that the user of canntaireachd observes in the consonantal system the three principal distinctions in the finger-techniques that determine part of the musical expression (see section 6.0). But canntaireachd represents more than music: it is also used as a musical tool to orally illustrate a point, theoretical or practical, relative to the ultimate instrumental performance.

The example of the Gesto record of *Ceann na Drochaide Bige* reminds us that 'manuscript' canntaireachd is not to be regarded as a fixed or 'original' standard, and makes it clear that the intelligibility of oral transmission is not preserved in all respects just because one transcribes the phonetic elements on paper. It was precisely because of this imperfect relationship between oral transmission and its written transcription that Colin Campbell, in making a collection of pibroch in written canntaireachd form, found himself forced to adapt the system in ways that often turn out to be unsingable. He was quite successful in his efforts to adapt canntaireachd in such a way that it can be used as an effective alternative method of notation on paper, but it is wrong to consider it as 'standard' canntaireachd, fit – without needing any reconstruction – for use in an oral context.[14]

5.0 Linguistic and musical dimensions of canntaireachd

It follows that, when examining canntaireachd, one must be aware of both its linguistic and musical dimensions.[15] Pipers' canntaireachd is not about using speech elements that, like the syllables of solfa systems, are purely lexical insofar as they are merely the names of notes; rather it reveals a pattern of

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[13] James Ross, 'The sub-literary tradition in Scottish Gaelic song-poetry – part 1', *Eigse* 7/4 (1955): 217.

[14] An interesting case is Calum Johnston's canntaireachd rendition of *Bodaich Dhubha nan Sligean*, 'The Old Men of the Shells', on the album *Pibroch: Volume 1*, Waverley Records/EMI Records ZLP 2034, 1964, LP. Having been requested to follow Colin Campbell's system, he did not sing it in his own usual canntaireachd, but still could not help allowing some of its characteristics – his own expressive variability – to 'creep in', as Chambers would have put it.

[15] For a sociological account see Chambers, 'Concepts of canntaireachd'.

close relationships between speech sound and musical meaning. These relationships work by phonaesthetic association; and for that reason, a degree of variability can be expected that would not be permissible in speech other than in the domain of onomatopoeia. However, while the system cannot be called a form of abstract solmisation, calling it onomatopoeic may obscure the fact that there is a certain degree of formalisation. The more general term 'phonaesthetic' seems preferable.

Like other forms of vocabelising, pipers' canntaireachd as an oral mode of transmission differs from written modes of transmission in that elements of the music that become automatically apparent in the singing, such as pitch, need not be expressed by speech symbols of their own. This may surprise those accustomed only to ordinary solmisation, but it explains why even basic information conveyed in the oral imitation of instrumental music is often lost in transcriptions that deal with the phonetic representation of the syllables. Similarly, those elements of performance that follow automatically from convention need not be differentiated in a concrete way in canntaireachd. As we noted earlier, the more formal aspects of vocabelising are concerned only with those musical elements that are considered to be essential for a systematic transmission. We need not, therefore, expect to find special linguistic symbols for elements that are less essential in this respect.

5.1 Phonology in speech and in canntaireachd

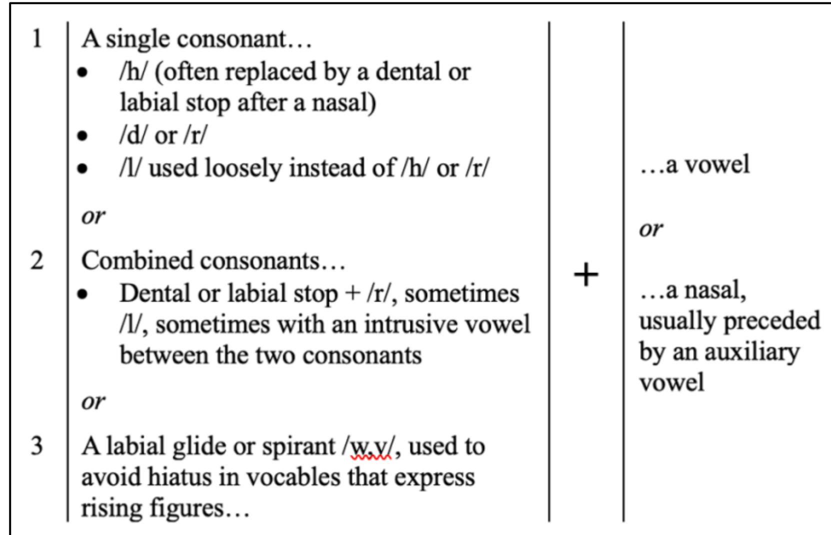
The sounds of canntaireachd do not cover the whole spectrum of sounds in the Scottish Gaelic language. Indeed, distinctions that are essential in the language may be ignored in canntaireachd. The most remarkable example is the near absence of a semantic distinction between dental and labial consonants in many pipers' canntaireachd. On the premise that language requires clear-cut boundaries between various classes of sounds, it would be improper to assume that the same clear-cut boundaries exist automatically in the phonetic realisations of the phonemes of canntaireachd. When one articulatory realisation happens to be clearly different from another, it may be so because of a certain prerequisite that is dictated by the inner phonological structure of canntaireachd; secondarily, it could also be due to the influence of articulated speech.

Like language itself, pipers' canntaireachd arranges speech sounds in such a way that a formal meaning becomes apparent. But the way that the sounds of canntaireachd are arrived at is quite different from the way words are formed in language. The arrangement of sounds in language is based on phonetic oppositions by which differences of meaning are implied when these sounds become part of a structure. Such structures may be nearly identical; e.g. English /dʌn/ 'dun' : /hʌn/ 'Hun'. However, the semantic difference does not extend to the opposing phonemes themselves (/d/ : /h/). Nor does the lack of phonetic opposition in the remaining element (/ʌn/) suggest any partial coincidence of meaning. Phonemes have no meaning by themselves; meaning begins only when they are combined to form morphemes.

While some sounds or combinations of sounds may be given an aesthetic value, the presence of sound-symbolic units, or *phonaesthemes*, affects but a small part of the vocabulary of any language. Canntaireachd, on the other hand, can be said to be built up entirely from phonaesthemes. Unlike the English words *dun* and *Hun*, the meanings of the canntaireachd syllables *din* and *hin* are identical to the degree in which they agree with each other in sound. Thus, meaning exists in canntaireachd on the level of individual phonemes or a few biphonemic units (e.g. /iɴ/, /ɴd̥/ and /d̥r/). It follows that the structure of the sounds of canntaireachd is very different from the structure of the words of language. This is why, in discussing canntaireachd, we refer to 'vocables' instead of 'words'.

6.0 Basic articulatory elements in pipe music and basic speech elements in canntaireachd

Pipers' canntaireachd consists of vocables, each forming a single melodic figure by combining syllables or by presenting a subdivision within such a figure. Aside from phonological developments and variants, the syllables are basically constructed using one or more consonants plus a vowel or nasal, as illustrated below (*Fig. 3*):



1	A single consonant… • /h/ (often replaced by a dental or labial stop after a nasal) • /d/ or /r/ • /l/ used loosely instead of /h/ or /r/ *or*	+	…a vowel *or* …a nasal, usually preceded by an auxiliary vowel
2	Combined consonants… • Dental or labial stop + /r/, sometimes /l/, sometimes with an intrusive vowel between the two consonants *or*		
3	A labial glide or spirant /w,v/, used to avoid hiatus in vocables that express rising figures…		

Fig. 3 The construction of vocables in canntaireachd

The elements associated with consonants reflect basic distinctions in the embellishments that determine part of the musical expression – embellishments characteristic of the bagpipe (*Fig. 4*):

A single consonant: single pseudo-note (/h/ = ‘cut’); (/d̥/ or /r/ = ‘strike’)	Combined consonants: cluster of pseudo-notes (/tʰ, d̥, b̥/ followed by /⁽ᵊ⁾r/ or /d̥⁽ᵊ⁾l/)	A labial glide: absence of a pseudo-note in a rising figure

Fig. 4 How consonants are expressed as bagpipe embellishments

True grace-notes – which, in contrast to cuts and strikes, have a definite musical pitch – are rarely represented in written sources of canntaireachd. Although taking noticeable time, they were apparently so short in most cases that, like grace-notes in song, they do not require a syllable of their own.

While pseudo-notes like cuts and strikes are indispensable and can be distinguished according to the fingers that are involved, sung canntaireachd distinguishes these pseudo-notes from each other only very imprecisely. Because the choice of fingers for realising a particular pseudo-note or cluster of pseudo-notes is already governed by theory, convention or convenience, it does not need to be expressed specifically. Broad distinctions, together with the formulaic nature of pibroch in respect of the distribution of types of figures, suffice to allow the piper to understand the finer performing aspects of an entire piece. What canntaireachd actually does on the formal level is not much more than indicate (1) the regions, within the gamut of the Highland bagpipe, to which the main notes belong; (2) whether a note is plain, or preceded by a single pseudo-note, or preceded by a cluster of pseudo-notes; and (3) how the notes are grouped. Indeed, apart from Colin Campbell’s adaptations for the purpose of a graphic notation system, canntaireachd does not tend to differentiate more than this. Where expressive variability does occur in its oral medium, this is partly because the inventory of sounds is larger in Scottish Gaelic than is required for canntaireachd; partly for reasons of euphony; and partly because of the occasional need to make ad hoc differentiations beyond the broad system.

6.1 Inventory of sounds in canntaireachd and Scottish Gaelic

Pibroch – and, consequently, pipers’ canntaireachd – were developed in the Gaelic-speaking parts of Scotland. Of the Gaelic inventory of sounds, the diphthongs /i̯a/, /i̯ɔ/, /i̯o/ and /i̯u/ seem to have been considered in the context of canntaireachd as simple vowels following a consonant (/h/, /tʰ/ or /pʰ/) that was modified by the addition of consonantal /ʲ/. Other diphthongs, like /au/, /ei/, and /ʲu(:)/, develop only before nasals, and are found only in John MacCrimmon’s canntaireachd (MC) as a means of expressive variability. Velar stops and the unvoiced fricatives /f/, /s/ and /ʃ/ are not used.

Apart from these restrictions, the whole range of Scottish Gaelic sounds appears to be used, although many of the phonetic oppositions inherent in the linguistic sound system are, characteristically, neutralised in canntaireachd.

While we may refer to the phonology of Scottish Gaelic being used in canntaireachd, we must realise that the relationship between sound and meaning is different in canntaireachd from such relationships as they exist in Gaelic. For instance, changes that historically affected vowels that occurred before long sonorants could also be reflected in canntaireachd in the treatment of an auxiliary vowel before a nasal, as will be demonstrated in a later section of this paper. But vowel mutations as they occur in language, such as /i^{+SON}/ becoming /ⁱ̯u:$^{+SON}$/, are apparently only imitated. Furthermore, the fact that canntaireachd sounds are based on (Scottish Gaelic) speech sounds should not imply that they are subject to mutation, because mutations as they operate in contemporary language relate to grammatical differentiations that cannot exist in a non-lexical system like canntaireachd. Once the interchangeability of /hʲo/ and /ho/ or /hʲa/ and /ha/ is accepted on the premise that palatalisation of consonants does not have any primary meaning in canntaireachd, even /hʲauɴ/ and /hʲuɴ/, deriving from /hiɴ/, could be replaced with /hauɴ/ and /huɴ/.

6.2 Neutralisation of phonetic oppositions in consonants

In spoken Gaelic, the distinction between an aspirated ('lenited') and a non-aspirated consonant is fundamentally important; likewise the distinction between a non-palatal ('broad') consonant and a palatalised ('slender') one. In canntaireachd, however, these distinctions are meaningless, and the oppositions are neutralised. Thus /tʰ/, /t′ʰ/, /d̥/, and /d̥′/ are entirely interchangeable, as are b̥/ and /pʰ/. Similarly, there is no difference between /h/ and /hʲ/.

Theoretically, *hia*- and *hio*- (as found in Gesto and in MacKay's 'Specimens') can be read as two syllables, whereby /hi/ would represent pibroch's introductory E figure, and this is certainly the case in vocables expressing double beats:

	MacCrimmon (Gesto)		MacKay's 'Specimens'		Campbell
… on D:	*hiavirla*	=	*hiaradalla*	=	*hiharara*
… on B:	*hiorero*	=	*hiorodo*	=	*hihorodo*

In most other cases, such a reading is less probable. Between vowels, /hʲ/ may be realised as [ç] in Gesto: *h*(*i*)*o*(*i*)*chin* in addition to *h*(*i*)*ohin* and *h*(*i*)*oin* (Table 1, no. 7). Intervocalic /h/ is usually weakened in Scottish Gaelic, hence Gesto's *h*(*i*)*oin* and Campbell's *h*(*i*)*oen*. Articulating /h/ as [ç] in vocables that express figures descending to low A (-*in*, -*en*) must be regarded as a more emphatic way of signaling that low A or low G is not played 'plain', but that a cut is played to separate it from the preceding note in a musically more articulate way. Curiously, this distinction was lost in Colin Campbell's system; Campbell did, however, use the alternative realisation of /hʲ/ as a scribal means of differentiating the note E, preceded by a cut from F, preceded by a cut (*che*-: *he*-); and, at some later stage, to distinguish high G (*chi*- : *hi*- = /hʲ/), which is not reflected in other sources.

In the Gaelic of Barra, Borgstrøm found /h/ sometimes very loosely articulated as [w] after /u/.[16] This fact may explain the occasional appearance of *v* instead of *h* after a neutral vowel (written *i*, *e* or *o*) in Gesto's representation of John Dubh MacCrimmon's canntaireachd:

- *ri-i-va* and *hieva* in tune no. 18, 'Lament for the Laird of Ainapole' (high G descending to D via E)
- *bitriova-o* in tune no. 7, 'Kiaunidize', but *bitrioha-vi* in tune no. 13, 'Lamentation of Mac Vic Allister' (F sharp descending to D via E)
- *diu viu* ... *hieo vio* in tune no. 17, 'Lament for King James' (high A descending to E and then rising to F sharp

[16] Carl Hjalmar Borgstrøm, 'The dialect of Barra in the Outer Hebrides', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* 8 (1937): 119.

The linguistic opposition between dentals and labials is neutralised to a great extent as far as stops are concerned. But in this case sources differ. MacCrimmon’s canntaireachd is the only variant that does not consider labials as random variants of dentals. The labials that it contains derive from transferring its occurrence in one particular phonetic context to another case, as will be discussed further in section 8.3. Colin Campbell used labials freely, but preferred dentals; by contrast, later sources mostly prefer labials. In the case of Colin Campbell and the later sources, the choice of a dental or a labial does not depend on phonetic context and does not make any difference otherwise. It is non-expressive and therefore does not qualify as a case of expressive variability.

6.3 Labialisation in MacKay’s ‘Specimens of Canntaireachd’

The matter is different, however, in the case of MacKay’s ‘Specimens’. While dental stops are the norm in the ‘Specimens’, a labial stop is always used when a stop is combined with a following /r/ and an intrusive vowel is developed before that /r/, as in *-bar-* vs. *-dr-*. (In the handwriting, *b* cannot be discerned from *h*, but the evidence of other canntaireachd sources indicates that *b* is meant.) Apart from the occasional combination *-mp-* occurring besides *-m-*, *-nt-* and *-nn-*, other uses of labial stops depend on phonetic or musical context.

The alternative forms *-din* and *-bin* express low A preceded by a strike. In the ‘Specimens’ they are both found after unstressed syllables only: *hiaro*din and *dallaro*din, but *hioro*bin*-dalla* and *hioro*binn*-um* (*Fig. 5*):

Fig. 5 Forms *-din* and *-bin* following unstressed syllables in MacKay’s ‘Specimens of Canntaireachd’.

This is not a random phonetic variation like the interchangeability of dentals and labials in other varieties of canntaireachd. The syllable appears as *-bin* when the main stress at the beginning of a vocable is sung to the vowel *o*, but it appears as *-din* in other cases. Even though the same thing is not reflected in language, being governed by phonetic context it seems to be a case of proper ‘free variation’ in linguistic terms. The labial stop also appears after a vowel that expresses a stressed or secondarily stressed shortened note. In nasal syllables, both consonants are labialized, normally with the rounding of the vowel. The use of the syllable *-bum* in the ‘Specimens’ is an example of expressive variability because it depends on musical context; in the above cases, the shortness of the note represented by *-o-*. In addition to MacKay, John Dubh MacCrimmon had a special articulation here, which was expressed by Gesto by doubling *d*: *-oddin*. For the development within the ‘Specimens’ by which the syllable became *-ma* or *-mo*, see section 8.1.

7.0 The system of vowels and nasals in Scottish Gaelic and in canntaireachd

Before discussing the vowels as they are used in canntaireachd, it may be useful to explain the vowel system of Scottish Gaelic. The points of articulation of Gaelic are schematised in *Table 2*.

	front	unrounded	back
close (high)	i	ɨ	u
half-close	e	ɘ	o
half-open	ɛ		ɔ
open (low)		←a/ɑ→	

Table 2: Scottish Gaelic vowels

In many dialects the distinction between /ɘ/ and stressed /ɨ/ is abandoned. Southern dialects make both sounds coincide with /ɛ/. In his spelling of MacCrimmon’s canntaireachd, Gesto opposed *i* and *ie*. He used the digraph *ie* for three different sounds in tune names: ‘Ch**ie**gch’ = *Chaogaich* /xɨkiç/ and ‘Cogh**ie**gh nha Sh**ie**’ = *Cogadh no Sìth* /k^{h}ɔkɘ(ɣ) ɴ′o ʃi:/. In his representation of canntaireachd, *ie* undoubtedly represents /ɨ/, but before nasals probably /ɘ/.

In *Table 3* we see the distribution of vowels and nasals as they are used for expressing stressed notes in the written nineteenth-century sources of canntaireachd. The table indicates how the gamut of the Highland bagpipe chanter is divided into three (or two) regions. From B, the range of notes from low to high is reflected by a range of articulations from mid-back to low (open) and then to front.

The table also applies to unstressed notes in rising figures. The vowels used for notes in descending and level figures follow the same scheme in Campbell's manuscript, but in Gesto's the colour of an unstressed note is often indefinite, appearing variously as *i, e, ie, u, o* or *a* (for some examples, see *Table 1*, nos. 1, 4, 9, 18–25). In MacKay's 'Specimens', the letter *u* is commonly used to express unstressed B and even low A after a higher note (e.g. *Table 1*, no. 13).

Northern				Southern (/ɨ/ > /ɛ/)			
MacCrimmon (MC)		*Specimens* (SP)		*Campbell* (CC)		*Anon.*(AN)	
high region: high notes → high vowels				high notes → front vowels			
A (a″)	*i, ie* (= /ɨ/)	A	*i, ie*[a] (= ?)	A	*i, I*		
G (g″)		G		G	*i, e*[b]		
F (f#″)		F		F	*e*	F	*i*
E (e″)	*i, ie, u*	E	*i, ie, I*	E	*e, i*[c]	E	
middle (lower) region: lower notes → low and mid-back vowels							
D (d″)	(*i*)*a* (= [a], [ʲɑ]	D	(*i*)*a*	D	*A*	D	*a*
C (c#″)	(*i*)*o*	C	(*i*)*o, ou*[d]	C	(*i*)*o*[e]		
B (b′)		B		B		B	
bottom region: bottom notes → nasals							
A (a′)	*n*[f], *ie*	A	*n, m, a/o*	A	*n*	A	*o, n*
G (g′)		G	*m, n*	G	*m*	G	
Twentieth-century sound records show mixtures of the canntaireachd of the 'Specimens' and that of the anonymous source in respect of the presentation of the middle and bottom regions							

[a] also *e, ee, ei*, which may be copying errors for *i* and *ie* or *u*, unless they are scribal differentiations;
[b] *e* preserved in very few instances;
[c] use of *i* limited to introductory E;
[d] also *oo*, perhaps as a copying error for *ou*; diacritic marks were also used for making a differentiation between B and C or between E and other top hand notes, but these undoubtedly were added by the last copyist of the texts;
[e] use of *io* limited to B;
[f] *n* + *v* > *mb*

Table 3 Distribution of vowels and nasals in stressed syllables as spelled in written sources of canntaireachd

In principle, the evidence afforded by Campbell's notation might allow for a one-to-one representation of notes using /m/ and /n/ for the two lowest notes and using /o/, /ɔ/, /a/, /ɛ/, /e/, /i/, /I/ for the notes B to high A successively – i.e. a gliding scale of vowels proceeding from half-close back via open to close front. However, the evidence afforded by the singing of John Dubh MacCrimmon is proof that such tendencies did not affect all users of canntaireachd, and that vowels and nasals were not associated with one particular note each – rather, with a region within the Highland bagpipe chanter's range.

7.1 Ad hoc differentiations in the vowel system

The 'Specimens' sometimes opposes *ou* and *o* to differentiate between the notes B and C sharp. This may be merely a scribal device. MacCrimmon opposed vowels written as (*i*)*o* and *uo*, though not

consistently, in Gesto no. 14, ‘Caugh Vic Righ Aro [*Cumha Mhic Rìgh Aro*], a Lament’. This is a case of expressive variability, as is the way the higher notes were often differentiated from each other in MacCrimmon’s canntaireachd as shown in Table 3. The fact that the same note can be expressed by different vowels (if they belong to the same register of articulation), as well as the fact that the nasals may be accompanied by various vowels as an auxiliary, gives the system a flexibility that makes it possible to express musical oppositions in an ad hoc way. Furthermore, I define this as a method of adapting the phonetic shape of a vocable in order to distinguish either agogic features or differences of pitch that normally are not distinguished in canntaireachd. This peculiarity is not as evident in modern sound recordings, but it can be extracted from the earlier written records – particularly Gesto’s record of the canntaireachd of John Dubh MacCrimmon.

One case illustrates how the three high or close vowels were distributed. The following example (*Fig.* 6) is MacCrimmon’s canntaireachd for the first half of the last line of the *ùrlar*, or opening theme, of tune no. 17 in Gesto, ‘Lament for King James’ (but which is known in other sources as ‘Colin Roy MacKenzie’s Lament’):

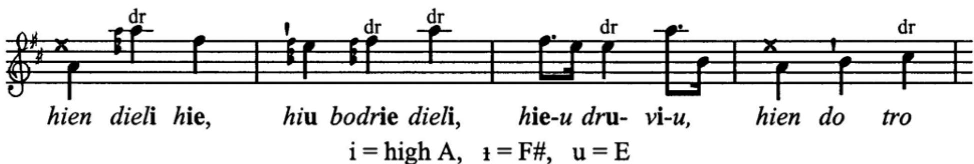


Fig. 6 High vowel distribution in Gesto No. 17, ‘Lament for King James’

Although the three high vowels are used here to express one specific note each, this cannot be taken as a rule, as earlier in the same tune the distribution of the high vowels is not so neat, and no semantic opposition is evident.

The high vowels are contrasted in various different ways in the last line of the *ùrlar* of tune no. 16 in Gesto, ‘Isabel Nich Kay’ [*Iseabail Nic Aoidh*] (*Fig. 7*):

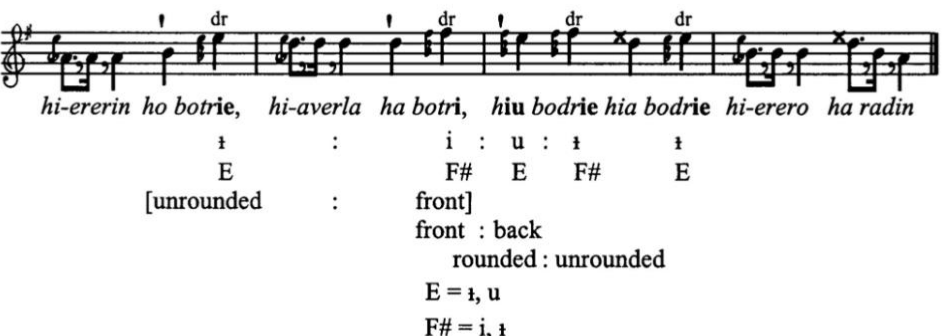


Fig. 7 High vowel distribution in Gesto no. 16, ‘Isabel Nich Kay’

The whole range of Gaelic high vowels is used here to contrast E and F sharp from one another, but it is done in such a variable way that the same vowel may stand for different notes. This, then, is a further example of expressive variability as it applies to vowels.

8.0 Nasals

Something similar happens with the auxiliary vowels of the nasal syllables.

In most varieties of canntaireachd, the two lowest notes of the gamut of the pipe chanter are expressed by nasals, usually preceded by an auxiliary vowel (see *Fig. 3* above). It is no accident that these low notes are expressed with a humming sound, given the fact that the drones are identified with the second note of the chanter, low A, to which they are tuned one and two octaves lower. Sometimes, however, the nasal is weakened or lost; see section 8.2.

Section 8.3 describes a treatment of the auxiliary vowel characteristic of MacCrimmon's canntaireachd. The variation between *m* and *n* in other varieties of canntaireachd parallels in one aspect MacCrimmon's typical rounding of the auxiliary vowel for the sake of expressive variability. The possible relationship between the rounding of the auxiliary vowel and the use of the labial nasal also appears from the shape of the syllable *-bum* in MacKay's 'Specimens' (see section 6.3), although the context there is different.

Colin Campbell exploited the variation between *n* and *m* to distinguish clearly in writing between low A and low G. In chanted canntaireachd this method of differentiating the two notes was a tendency at most, and was not consistently pursued, as can be seen from the evidence of MacKay's 'Specimens' and later sound recordings. The distinction was not there at all in the singing of John Dubh MacCrimmon: in Gesto's record of MacCrimmon's canntaireachd, *n* is the norm for both low A and low G, and *m* appears only in specific cases, without necessarily signalling low G.

8.1 Reduced notes

Sometimes low A is played so short that, like a true grace-note, it is not expressed syllabically. The 'Specimens' omit the auxiliary vowel in such cases. Campbell's notation omits both the auxiliary vowel and the nasal itself after a stressed note and before a following *d* (but eventually the form of the vocable was revised in the manuscript). After an unstressed note, the auxiliary note alone was sometimes omitted by Campbell and MacCrimmon (*Fig. 8*):[17]

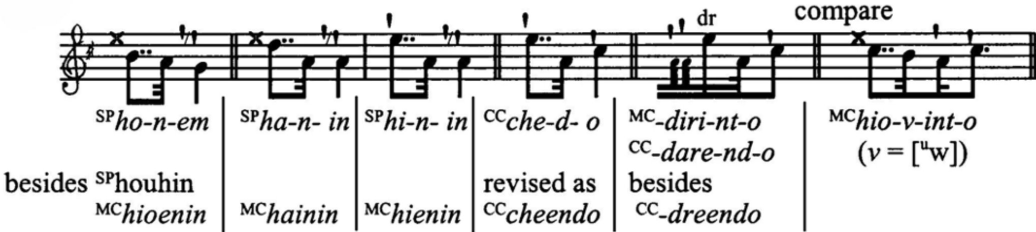


Fig. 8 Omission of auxiliary vowels and notes

8.2 Anticipatory nasalisation and denasalisation

In two sources of canntaireachd, nasalisation occurs in the initial consonant of a syllable that ends or originally ended in a nasal. The vocables appearing as *h*(*i*)*odin* in MacCrimmon and Campbell were written *hah***mb***um* and *hoh***mb***um* by Malcolm MacInnes.[18] In the 'Specimens' the nasal at the end is weakened, and the anticipatory nasal suppresses the original stop: *h(i)o-**mo*** or *h(i)o-**ma***, *-dalla-**mo*** (see Table 1, no. 5 and the illustration in section 6.3).

The letter *m* in *h(i)o-mo* or *h(i)o-ma* may stand for [m^{b}], which is one dialectical realisation of /-m b̥-/ in Scottish Gaelic. One may compare the spelling 'Hanurich orst' for *Tha 'n daorach ort*, one of the tune titles in the 'Specimens', which features the same phenomenon in the case of /-ɴ d̥-/. The difference is that [m] (or [m^{b}]) appears only after long stressed notes.

For low A preceded by a strike, the 'Specimens' have *-bum* after a short stressed note and *-bin* and *-din* after an unstressed note (see section 6.3). In the canntaireachd of many later sound recordings, *-din*, *-bin*, *-bum* and *-mo* may all appear as *-bo*.[19] MacCrimmon and Campbell have *-din* in all cases.

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[17] Buisman's use of the word 'besides' in Figure 9 is meant in the sense of 'alternatively', 'secondarily', or 'in addition to'. –Ed.

[18] Malcolm MacInnes, letter to the *Oban Times*, 16 August 1924.

[19] E.g. P/M Robert Urquhart Brown and P/M Robert Bell Nicol, 'John MacDonald's Teaching Methods', interview by Robin Lorimer, School of Scottish Studies Archives, 1953, SA1953.256.B5/B6/B7, audio tape.

That is not to say that denasalisation does not occur in John Dubh MacCrimmon's canntaireachd, as recorded by Gesto. Nearly all of the examples are found in one tune— 'Kilchrist', or *Cill Chrìosda* (Gesto no. 20), viz. ***h**in**dr**ie*, (*c*)***h**in**dr**in* and ***h**ii**edr**ie* for **hi-en-drin*; ***h**ie**h**ie**dr**ie* for **hin-in-drin*; and *hindirind**ie*** for **hin-dirin*(*d*)*-an*. In addition, tune no. 7, 'Kiaunidize' (*Ceann na Dèise*, 'the tip of the ear of corn', known predominantly today as The Earl of Ross's March), has *hinderint**a*** for expressing a low A-based figure as a coda. Tune no. 18, 'Lament for the Laird of Ainapole', has *haine* and *hi*(*e*)*ndan* as well as *hienhi*[*n*] for expressing low A and low G preceded by a cadence, but it is unclear whether this represents *hain-**e*** /hɛnə/ or ***ha**-ine* /ha-iɴ(')/. As in later *-bo*, there seems to be no phonological reason for the loss of the nasal in these cases.

Alexander MacGregor's anonymous canntaireachd record of *Fàilte a' Phrionnsa* ('The Prince's Salute') shows a considerable decrease in the use of nasals for expressing low A and low G, in addition to considerable erosion of the system of consonants, at least as MacGregor presented it on paper:[20]

Fig. 9 Fàilte a' Phrionnsa ('The Prince's Salute')

Other cases of denasalisation follow phonetic context. A nasal may disappear before /ʀ/ in many dialects; e.g. Barra: /b̥ã:ʀiɴ'/ *banrighinn*, meaning 'queen'.[21] In all varieties of canntaireachd, it disappears both before and after /r/ or /ʀ/: [MC]*-dir-*, [CC]*-dar-*, and [CC, SP]*-bar-* as well as [MC, SP]*-drin* for */d̥əʀɴ and b̥əʀɴ/; we also find [MC]*hie*(*re*)*rin* and [CC]*hiharin* for */hi-ənrənrin/, but the nasals are restored in [SP]*hianana*. In Gesto alone, we find *hia-rerin*(*e*), *hiu-rerin*(*e*), and *hie-rerin*(*e*) for */hʲaɴ-/hʲuɴ-/həɴ-rərin/ and, analogously, *hia-dirin* as well as *han-dirit, h*(i)*un-dirit,* and *hien-dirit*.

The combination */ʀɴ/ disappears altogether before another consonant in the syllable of the vocable expressing pibroch's *criùnnludh* embellishment: for example, [MC]*-da-t*(*i*)*ri*, [MC]*-die-dru*, and [CC]*-ban-dre* (with *n* reintroduced, which is, however, less convenient to sing). Before a vowel that expresses a top hand note (E or higher), MacKay's 'Specimens' insert /d̥/ after */ʀɴ/: [SP]*hi-bar-inn-* accords with [CC]*che-bar-em-*, but [SP]*hi-bird-i-* accords with [CC]*che-bar-e-*, whilst [MC]*hie-dir-ie* and [SP]*hi-bord-ee-* accord with [CC]*che-bar-e*.

A nasal has also disappeared before the dental stop in [MC]*-dirieto*, a variant of which appears as *-dirinto*. Similarly, one finds *-dirie todirie t-*. On this basis, [MC]*-dirin,* [MC]*-dirit* and [CC]*-darid* have all been generalised as vocables expressing the *taorludh* finger movement. In all these cases *-it* or *-id*

[20] Alexander MacGregor, 'Piobaireachd agus ceol nan Gaidheal', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 2 (1872/73): 21, quoted by W. L. Manson, *The Highland Bagpipe* (Paisley, 1901), 105. MacGregor is not entirely reliable as a source. He was much given to stretching the data he had to suit his own views on tradition.

[21] Carl Hjalmar Borgstrøm, 'The dialects of the Outer Hebrides: a linguistic survey of the Gaelic dialects of Scotland – Part 1', *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, Supplement 1 (1940): 224.

probably expresses some degree of reduction in the final low A of the *taobhludh* finger movement in opposition to *-in*.

8.3 The sounds /h/ and /v,w/ in contact with nasals

The sound /h/ is rarely used independently in Gaelic; e.g. *na Hearradh*, 'Harris'; *na Haf*, 'the Atlantic', but *an tabh*, 'the ocean' (< Old Norse haf). Otherwise, /h/, written *sh* and *th*, is a mutation of /s/ and /t^{h}/. Similarly, /v/, written *mh* and *bh*, is a mutation of /m/ and /b̥/. Mutations are mostly neutralised after a homorganic consonant; hence *caile thana*, 'lean girl', but *cailin tana*, idem. The opposition radical versus mutated sound developed into grammatical oppositions; e.g. *a theud*, his string, and *a teud*, her string; *ga bhualadh*, striking him, and *ga bualadh*, striking her.

In pibroch, the sound /v,w/ fills a hiatus between vowels in vocables that express melodic rising motifs. In Gesto this sound was transferred to vocables in which a nasal occurs in the position of the first of the two vowels, after which a shift of articulation takes place: for example, [-nw-] becomes [-mb-] or [-m^{b}-], with vocables like *hi**ova*** and *hie**mbo**-* reflecting the opposition found grammatically in ***a' bh**àird* and ***am b**àrd*. This would explain the peculiar distribution of /m/ in John Dubh MacCrimmon's canntaireachd, found only in this context and in the vocable *hie**md**odin* in Gesto's nameless tune no. 15.

The 'Specimens' have *himtoma* and *hintoma* for MacCrimmon's *hiemdodin*, differentiating initial low G from low A. In MacCrimmon's form of the vocable, /-md̥-/ must be a result of dissimilation of /-mb-/. The replacement of [b] with /d̥/ may be caused by the wish to express a stronger accent on the note that is sung on the vowel *o*. The labial nasal would still be required to indicate that the next note is plain i.e. that it does not take a cut. It makes the use of /-md̥-/ another case of expressive variability.

We also find a certain 'creep' appearing in cases in which an element with a clear structural purpose in one type of vocable becomes used in other types, despite less of a functional basis. In Gesto, for instance, the element /*bo*/ in *hiembotrie* expresses the hiatus when moving vocally from /*hiem*/ (low A or low G) to /*trie*/, an embellishment on E, F sharp or high G known as a 'throw', but we find that the same element becomes used to precede the throw even when it follows other notes, e.g. *hobotrie* (a throw from B). Something similar occurs in the corresponding vocables of the 'Specimens' where *hindidri* (a throw from low A) inspired *hiodidri* (a throw from B).

Etymologically, /t^{h}/ and /b̥/ are radicals and /h/ and /v/ are derived sounds in Gaelic. But in canntaireachd the relationship is the other way round: /h/ seems to be the radical sound. Since, as a consequence of neutralising mutations after a homorganic consonant, /h/ rarely occurs immediately after /n/, /ɴ/ or /ɴ′/ in Gaelic, it is only to be expected that /h/ is replaced by something else after a nasal and that the replacement would follow the same procedure by which, in an earlier stage of the language, Norse ***h**af* became ***t**abh*. This was a back-formation prompted by the development **ant haf* > **an t-haf* that was caused by regular projection of the dental. The variation /h/ : /t^{h}/ ultimately follows the same pattern as ***th**ig* (/hik′/ 'come') and *gun **t**ig* (/g̊əɴ d̥′ik′/ 'that … will come').

Table 4 suggests some parallels between canntaireachd and features of Scottish Gaelic. Of course, the use of /h/ after a nasal in canntaireachd must primarily be explained as a more emphatic way of expression that may be appropriate in a rhythmic context, such as found in Gesto's *hienhin*, especially in the rising melody motif. But even though /h/ as seen at the beginning of the second vocable in Gesto's *hindin hoho* occurs more frequently in that context, it is essentially a restoration of the original sound, following the example of other vocables found in both Gesto and Campbell, such as *haha hoho*. The example of Gesto's *hindin toho* clearly shows a tendency to follow normal Gaelic phonological mechanics and is therefore strong evidence that the occurrence of *-nd-* too must be related to Gaelic /h/ : (nasal +) dental stop.

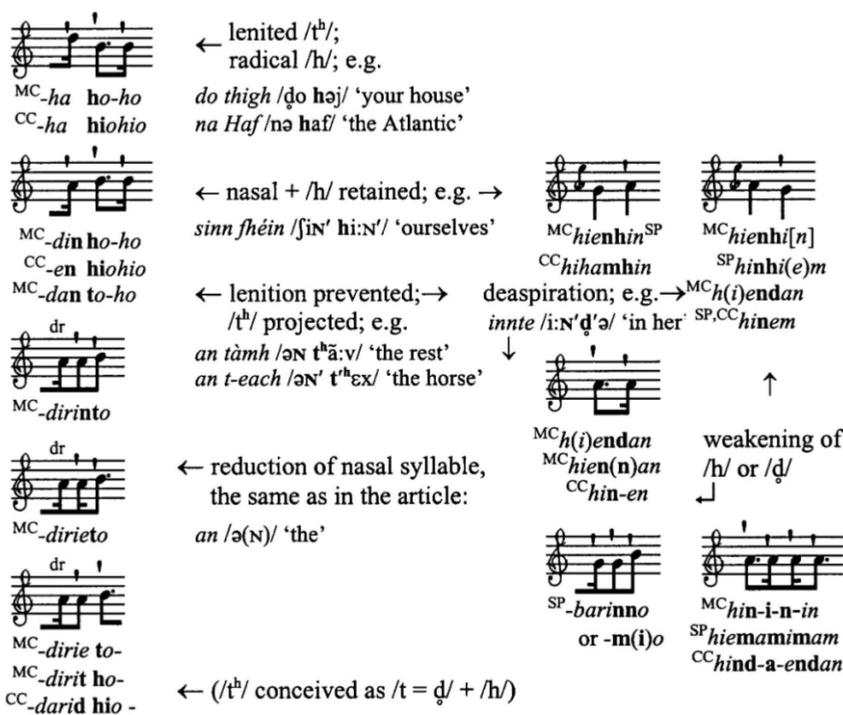

Table 4 /h/ : /tʰ/, /d̥/ in canntaireachd and in Scottish Gaelic

8.4 Vowel differentiations in nasal syllables

John Dubh MacCrimmon's canntaireachd, as it was presented in print by MacLeod of Gesto, shows a predilection for *-an* after *-nd-*. Otherwise, the two basic vowels that he used as auxiliaries for the nasals were /i/ and /ə/ (or /ɨ/), spelled *i* and *ie*. These are also the spellings for the two principal sounds in MacKay's 'Specimens', whereas Campbell uses *i* and *e*. Campbell's manuscripts use the letter *a* as a scribal device to indicate that the preceding cut is made by a flick of the D finger. MacKay's 'Specimens' suggest the same intent, but may use it to express a rhythmic difference, but not the specific fingering of the cut. The evidence of MacCrimmon's canntaireachd contradicts the view that cuts were differentiated in canntaireachd by either a specific consonant or a specific auxiliary vowel.

MacCrimmon shows a greater variety of vowels in the nasal syllables. The variation between *in* and *ien* seems to be meaningless, whereas the use of other auxiliary vowels signals, with few exceptions, some kind of contrast. Contrasts are not always expressed but, when they are, they are more consistently given than in the case of the ad hoc vowel differentiations that express the top hand notes (see section 7.1). This is because in the case of the nasal syllables there is never more than one pitch opposition involved at a time. Nevertheless, the various vowels are used for expressing more than one kind of opposition.

In Gesto's tune no. 10, 'Lassan Phadrig Chiegch' (*Lasan Phàdruig Chaogaich*, 'A Flame of Wrath for Squinting Patrick'), we find *hiento*, or *hiendo*, used in opposition to *hieinto*, or *hieindo*. The spelling *hieinto* or *hieindo* clearly points to introductory E being expressed by a syllable of its own and, consequently, *hien-* in the contrasted form must also be read as two syllables. Therefore, it is unlikely that the introductory E was expressed syllabically in *-chinto*, or in *hiendo* in the later variations. In the *ùrlar* and in the beginning of the first variation of the tune, *-ento*, or *-endo*, stands for low A followed by C sharp, whilst *-einto,* or *-eindo*, stands for low G followed by B. The contrast is expressed by the different colours of the auxiliary vowel of the nasal syllable, or rather, the diphthong is used in the second form as a means of expressing a difference – in this case, distinguishing low G from low A.

The difference between a simple vowel and a diphthong is also recognized (though realised differently in the later variations) in Gesto's tune no. 4, 'Mac Vic Horomoid *alias* McLeod Gesto's

Gathering' (*Mac Mhic Thormoid*), where we have the opposition *hia*(*n*)- : *haun*-. Again, the diphthong in *haun*- expresses low G, and it is possible to relate /hauɴ/ to /hɛɴ/ in line with Gaelic phonological developments. The diphthong that is heard in /eiɴ′/ occurs in Scottish Gaelic only before a palatal sonorant. Otherwise, /ɛɴ/ is diphthongised as /ɛuɴ/ in some dialects, and develops into /^{i}au/ in a number of others (compare Gesto's spelling *kiaun* for *ceann* /k ^{i}iauɴ, k′auɴ, k′ɛuɴ/). The expected form of the canntaireachd syllable would be *hiaun*-, but since, unlike Gaelic, *hio*- and *hia*- are interchangeable with *ho*- and *ha*- in canntaireachd, *haun*- may have developed as a free variant of *hiaun*-. From there it takes but a small step to arrive at *han*- as the monophthongised contrasting form. Again, the intrusive palatal element in *hian*- would be an option generally available in canntaireachd.

Vowel mutations, as they occur in the declensions of Gaelic nouns, originally had a phonetic base. But in the practice of language, etymology plays but a minor role, and in canntaireachd etymological awareness cannot replace expressive functionality. Moreover, the mutations gradually acquired new linguistic values signalling different grammatical functions. Because such functions do not exist outside language, mutations can serve only as a model for variability in canntaireachd, and no exact correspondences between the occurrence of mutations in language and in canntaireachd should be expected. Still, it is a curious fact that we do have some kind of match between a paradigm that has ceased to be part of the living language and the different ways in which the vowels of nasal syllables are varied in canntaireachd. On the basis of i- and u-umlaut, caused by vowels that were dropped at the end of words, Gaelic developed a paradigm /ɛ$^{+\text{NON-PAL}}$/ : /i$^{+\text{PAL}}$/ : /i$^{+\text{NON-PAL}}$/. However, the opposition /ɛ$^{+\text{NON-PAL}}$/ : /i$^{+\text{NON-PAL}}$/ was abandoned in later language, so that we now find nom. *fear*, 'a man', gen. sing. *fir* (< *firi), dat. sing. *fear* (instead of *fior < firu). On a lexicographical level, the nominative form either agrees with the expected form (e.g. *meadar*, milk bowl) or with the expected form of the dative (*miodar*, idem). It seems that regional predilections in this matter are more consistent than decisions made by lexicographers. Before an originally long sonorant, the paradigm would appear in modern language as /ɛu/ or /(^{i})au : /i:$^{+\text{PAL}}$/ : /^{i}u:$^{+\text{NON-PAL}}$/. Again, this paradigm has not been retained in full. On the lexical level we find either the variant *tionndadh* or *teanndadh* ('turning'); *sionnsar* or *seannsar* ('chanter'); and so on. The full paradigm occurs only in rare instances like nom. sing. *ceann*, 'head', nom. plural *cinn*, adv. *os cionn*, 'above'.

Being a remnant from an earlier stage of the language, it is the more curious to find the vowel alteration /i:/ : /^{i}u:/ reflected in the canntaireachd of John Dubh MacCrimmon around the year 1800. As we have seen, the later variations of Gesto's 'Mac Vic Horomoid … Gathering' show the opposition *hia*(*n*)- : *haun*-, contrasting low A and low G. But in the first variation, the same contrast is expressed by the opposition *hi*(*e*)*nd*- : *hiund*-. Depalatalised *hund*- also occurs in the same variation. Depalatalised *u*-forms are further used in Gesto's tunes no. 6 ('The Union of Scotland with England') and no. 14, 'Caugh Vic [*Cumha Mhic*] Righ Aro, a Lament'.

In all these cases, the diphthongised syllables and *h*(*i*)*u*(*n*)- express low G in opposition to low A; the only exception is at the beginning of the *taorludh* variation of Gesto's tune no. 5, 'Mac Vic Horomoid … Lamentation', where *hiurerine* expresses low A. In the same tune, where *hiurerin* is used to express the double beat on low A– similar to *hiererin* – it takes the *u*-vocalism for no apparent reason. The opposition between *u*-vocalism and *i*-vocalism is not always consistent, and in some cases the inconsistency may be due to printing errors. In Gesto no. 14, 'Caugh Vic Righ Aro', we encounter a gradual decrease of low G being specified. With the exception of *hieinto*, all cases where low G is specified appear in the variations of tunes. In most tunes the opposition between low A and low G is not expressed at all.

Although Colin Campbell's manuscripts contain no traces of the *u*-vocalism itself, Campbell's use of *m* to express low G may be related to something similar. But the oppositions described above are not exclusively used for contrasting low G to low A. The *u*-vocalism is also used when a movement ends with a repetition of four figures based on low A. In the first variation of Gesto no. 1, 'Luinagieh *alias* Auiltich', both syllables are affected; but elsewhere the first syllable of a vocable is

affected only when the last syllable cannot be affected. Otherwise, the last syllable takes the special vocalism.

In the later variations of Gesto's 'Mac Vic Horomoid … Lamentation', low A is expressed as *hiu*(*n*)- when it occurs at the beginning of a line. By contrast, when it occurs at the end of a movement, we have *hindan* and *hinderin* (= *hindrin*) in the earlier variations (except in the very first instance, where we find *hundin*); and at the end of the two last variations, we have *hindun*.

Curiously, the evidence presented in *Table 5* indicates that the vocable for the double beat on low A (*hiererin*) is never affected at the end of movements:

– double beat on low A in the Ùrlar:
4. ***hie****rurine*, ***hiu****rerin*

final versus non-final

1. *h***iun***d***un**, *hiend***un** *hiendirind***un** *h***iun***dirit* *h***iun***datri* *hiendatrieri*
   *hind***in**, *hiend***in** *h***ien***dirie t-* *h***ien***datri* *hiendatrieri*

3. *hanin***un** *h***un***dirit* *h***un***dat*(*i*)*ri* *h***iun***dratatateriri*
   *hanin***in** *h***an***dirit* *h***an***datri* *h***ien***datatateriri*
   *h***ien***datri*, *h***in***datiri*

7. no special vocalism

11. *hiendaderin***un**

13. no special vocalism

– expressing low A in metrically important positions versus other positions:

5. *h***un***din*, *hind***un** *h***iu***rerine* *h***iun***datri* *hind***an**

– Apart from one occurrence in Gesto no. 14, Gesto no. 1 is the only tune that has *hi*(*e*)*nd***in** instead of *hi*(*e*)*nd***an**. Gesto no. 20 uses *hiend***un** throughout instead of *hiend***an**. -*nd***un** also seems to replace *nd***an** in the first variation and its doubling in Gesto no. 14.

– low G versus low A

4. *h*(**i**)**un***dan* *h***aun***inin* *h***aun***inin* *h***aun***datiri* *h***iun***dratatirirri*
   *h***in***dan* *h***ia***rerin* *h***ia***dirin* *h***ian***datiri* *h***ian***dratatirirri*

6. *h***un***dan* *h***ur**(*i*)*erin* *h***un***dinin* *h***un***datiri*
   *h***ie***rerin* *h***in***dirin* *h***in***datiri*

10. *hi***ein***to*, *hi***ein***do*
    *hi***en***to*, *hi***en***do*

14. *h***un***dun*, *hind***un** *hindirit*, *h***un***dirit* *hindatri*
    *h***in***dun*, *hind***in** *h***in***dirit hindatri*

1, 8, 12 and 20: no vowel contrast

Table 5 Contrasted vocalism in nasal syllables

Our conclusion must be that expressive variability signals something definite, but that a variety of phonetic oppositions can be utilized, and that one can also choose not to differentiate at all.

9.0 Structural equivalence

In cases where a figure is played on notes that do not allow the normal motion of fingers for executing cuts and strikes, vocables may still be formed as if normal fingering were possible. We find this peculiarity in three different contexts.

The sound /h/ is customarily used before a vowel in cases where the note would be preceded by a cut – usually the high G cut. High A, as the highest note in the range of the chanter, cannot be preceded by a cut. We find, however, particularly in Gesto, that /h/ is often used before a vowel that expresses high A, even though a cut cannot be played before high A. Only Colin Campbell left out *h*- in this case.

The second case is the use of *-nd-* or *-nt-* in vocables that express figures that normally take a D-cut after low A or low G, but must omit the cut before D and higher notes. Evidently, rhythmic congruence was considered more important than the exact method of execution. Even Colin Campbell retained the dental stop in cases where no cut was played, even extending its use to cases in which the preceding note is B; for example, *hiodi* (instead of *hiovi*) following *himdi*. The constructions *-bird-i-* and *-bord-ee-* in MacKay's 'Specimens' may represent something similar.

The third case is the most peculiar. It does not occur in the Campbell manuscripts, because it would go against Campbell's evident aim to create, out of canntaireachd, a precise and prescriptive notation system. Here is how Gesto uses the vocable *-oradin* for two melodic figures (*Fig. 10*):

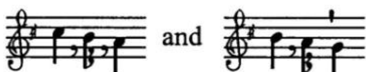

Fig. 10 Melodic figures expressed in Gesto by the vocable *-oradin-*

The construction *-rad-* normally expresses a note that takes a strike before and after it. Being the lowest note in the range of the chanter, low G cannot be preceded by a strike. The explanation appears to be that the vocable is used for both figures because they are structurally equivalent to each other, because they present the same motif beginning on different notes. Nevertheless, both *-oa*(*c*)*hin* and *-oradin* may be used in the same tune for denoting the figure when it descends to low G.

10.0 Conclusion

Canntaireachd's imitative nature makes it an inherently vivid and musically expressive form of vocalisation. But it is not in canntaireachd's nature to distinguish every aspect of instrumental performance in fixed and formal detail: one only distinguishes what one thinks important enough to be distinguished in terms of retention, transmission, and communication. In essence, the formal distinctions made in canntaireachd concern the following musical oppositions:

1. separating notes from each other with a single cut, single strike, or a cluster of pseudo-notes, or not using pseudo-notes at all
2. repeated strike versus single strike, including repeated notes separated from each other by strikes or cuts (the use of repeated *l* and *r* needs to be analysed further)
3. regions within the gamut of the Highland bagpipe, making it possible to express consonant or dissonant sonorities within a given tune.

The aim of canntaireachd is not achieved with the help of purely abstract symbols; rather, like any expressive vocabelisation, it is a method of *exchanging information about music through music*. The finer elements of melody such as the exact position of the notes in a scale are normally not part of the phonetic level of expression; instead, distinctions are involved that are subtler than distinctions between pitches. But one may differentiate the use of vowels or nasals and other consonants for the sake of expressive variability in order to indicate other subtleties, or an exact note. In this way, a failure to recognise that variability's function is of an expressive nature risks missing out musical nuances that the singer may be attempting to convey in their vocabelisation of an idealised performance on the pipes.

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NOTE: Hyperlinks were unavailable to the author, but have been added to some items here for the convenience of researchers. –Ed.

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‘We in Scotland have to make our stand for pure Liberalism’: John M. Bannerman and Scottish politics, 1932–1968

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Abstract
This article assesses the political career of John M. Bannerman from his entry into Scottish politics in the early 1930s until his final speeches in the House of the Lords in the late 1960s. The principal issue which it addresses is the history of the Liberal party in Scotland in the period from 1945 to the late 1960s. By analysing Bannerman's Liberal candidatures (he stood eight times in four different Scottish constituencies from 1945 to 1964, losing on each occasion), his attitude to Scottish Home Rule, his role in keeping the Scottish Liberal Party alive, and his ideas on the revival of the Scottish Highlands, it deals with his role in the survival of a party which had once dominated Scottish politics but had fallen into deep decline. The position of the Liberal Party during a period in which the Labour Party and the Scottish Unionist Party dominated the politics of Scotland is also a theme of the article. Some additional comments are made about the way in which both the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party have deployed Bannerman’s memory in arguing their positions vis-à-vis post-devolution Scottish politics.

In December 1967 the well-known Liberal politician, John M. Bannerman, made a powerful speech about the condition of the Scottish Highlands:

> The Highlands constitute 9 million acres – half the area of Scotland; yet only 4 percent of the people of Scotland stay there and live there. The Kildonan clearances have had their counterpart throughout Scotland for two centuries, and they still continue, not so blatantly to-day, but numerically far worse. If the Scottish Highlander is not to die off in a nature reserve the Highlands Board[1] must renew the whole economic fabric of the Highlands. This it can do by making the owner of land … in the Highlands a trustee of the nation for the production of folk and food. I do not suggest nationalisation or expropriation, but I feel that if the owner of land cannot do what he ought to do for the land he owns, then a fair rental should be paid to him to allow others to do the job. There are in the Highlands one million acres, undeveloped and bracken-covered, which, after survey and reclamation, could be allocated to the production of folk and food and timber. … the question of land is basic to the survival of our area of the Highlands, and of Scotland, and it must enter into any debate which concerns itself with the condition of Scotland. So I feel that the improvident neglect of our limited land resources in Scotland is a constant rebuke to Government.[2]

That a prominent Liberal with a long history of political activity in the Scottish Highlands should make such remarks might seem a straightforward event. The context in which the speech was made, however, casts a different light on its contents. Bannerman had just been ennobled, as Lord Bannerman of Kildonan, and this speech was made in the House of Lords, a forum unused to

[1] The Highlands and Islands Development Board, founded by the Labour government in 1965 with the aim of diversifying the economy of the Scottish Highlands.
[2] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser. vol. 287, cols 706–7, 6 December 1967.

hearing pleas for Scottish land reform.[3] This paper will seek to explain how his career came to this point, and examine what this tells us about Scottish politics in the post-war period. There will be a particular focus on the decline, but ultimate survival, of the Liberal party as part of Scotland's political scene.

At first sight the political career of John M. Bannerman is impressive. attractive, but only in an anecdotal sense. Prior to his elevation to the House of Lords in 1967 he had been a Liberal candidate in Scotland in eight contests between 1945 and 1964, losing on each occasion. He was one of those who kept alive the Liberal party, once dominant in Scotland, in its least successful period. He had been involved in the gathering of disparate sects which led in 1934 to the formation of the Scottish National Party. (His particular involvement was with the Scottish Party, a short-lived and quite right-wing organisation, which subsequently merged with the National Party of Scotland in 1934 to produce the SNP.) Prior to his death in the late 1960s, Bannerman served as President of the Scottish Liberal Party, and the organisational improvements that he had overseen were largely credited for the party's better electoral performances in that decade.

In addition to his political skills, Bannerman possessed an attractive character. The *Times* described him as 'a big man with the Gaelic, a great record on the rugby field, and enough charm and eloquence even to make members of the Free Church stop on their way to devotions'.[4] As a sportsman, he had been one of the heroes of the Scottish rugby team which enjoyed considerable success in the 1920s including, in 1925, Scotland's first Grand Slam win. A highly competitive second-row forward, he was capped on thirty-seven consecutive occasions between 1921 and 1929 – a record which stood until 1962 – and in the 1950s served as President of the Scottish Rugby Union. As John Fowler has written:

> For almost the entire 'twenties Bannerman was every Scots boy's hero on the rugby field, a stocky, bristling second-row forward who played hard for every second of the eighty minutes, a masterly controller of the ball who led those great forward rushes which typified Scottish rugby between the wars.[5]

Bannerman was dedicated to the amateur ethos of rugby; indeed, something of this carried over to his view of politics:

> I have always been of the opinion that rugby was a game to be played and not talked about … rugby is a game of worth, to be enjoyed by the player for its skills and its sciences and for the lessons it teaches.[6]

He was a proponent of vigorous forward play and the merits of the 3-2-3 formation in the scrum (as opposed to 3-4-1) which he saw as quintessentially Scottish and central to the Scottish team's success in recording ten victories in twelve matches between 1925 and 1927. In his memoirs he drew a political lesson from this experience:

> I hope that Scotland will never forget the lesson we learned in rugby and will seek to apply it in all Scottish matters. Take what is good from other countries, test it, use it, but never allow the natural, traditional Scottish methods and outlook to be submerged … Scotland has a unique position in this respect and affection of the peoples of the world with whom she has any contact. She retains this regard in spite of the standardising influence and dictation of

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[3] Bannerman's elevation to the Lords was not uncontroversial: the Young Liberals criticised him, as well as party leader Jeremy Thorpe, over the matter of life peerages; *Times*, 17 November 1967, 1.

[4] *Times,* 24 March 1966, 8.

[5] John Fowler (ed.), *Bannerman: The Memoirs of Lord Bannerman of Kildonan* (Aberdeen: Impulse Publications, 1972), 48. The editor, a journalist on the *Scottish Daily Express*, described in his 'Preface' (at page 9) the way he 'revised and edited the manuscript [left unfinished by Bannerman on his death in 1968] in detail and … tried to fill in briefly the most obvious gaps in his incomplete narrative'.

[6] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 58–9.

> centralised government in London. It says much for the tenacity and distinctive qualities of the Scot and for the worth of his institutions that we still survive the greatest takeover bid in history – the submergence and the absorption of the Scottish parliament by its English counterpart in 1707.[7]

As the *Times* noted, Bannerman was also a leading figure in the world of Scottish Gaelic, where he was a well-regarded singer, and in 1922 was a gold medallist at the Mòd – the annual festival of Gaelic culture – having won the recitation medal in 1921. He was a frequent broadcaster in Gaelic and a stalwart servant of a variety of organisations which sought to promote the language in post-war Scotland.[8]

Bannerman's family background was among the Gaels of Glasgow, his father having migrated from the Hebridean island of South Uist as a small child in 1873. In his memoirs he recalled that 'everything conspired to make my life one of two worlds', Gaelic and English.[9] Although many of his political contests were in Highland constituencies, where he used his Gaelic identity to good effect, he was also able to draw on his background in the urban industrial areas of the Western Lowlands in his contests in Paisley in 1961 and 1964.

Bannerman was also a noted farmer, with sheep and cattle at Balmaha in Stirlingshire. Having come to know the Montroses while working in Arran for the Department of Agriculture, Bannerman became a tenant of the 6th Duke of Montrose from 1930, and for a period acted as the Duke's estate manager, or 'factor'. The Duke was involved in nationalist politics and the Duchess was a Gaelic enthusiast. Towards the end of his career, Bannerman's relationship with the Marquess of Graham, later the 7th Duke of Montrose, a university contemporary at Oxford, brought him into controversial areas related to the Duke's position as Agriculture Minister in the Rhodesian Cabinet and a signatory, in 1965, of the Unilateral Declaration on Independence.[10] Angus Graham, as he was known in Rhodesia, was by the 1960s marginalised in Rhodesian politics 'due to his relatively hard-line stance on racial separation (even by Rhodesian standards)'.[11]

So we need to ask: how do we characterise John Bannerman? Some paradoxes and complexities must be noted. Was he a Liberal or a Scottish nationalist, both of those political labels having several distinct varieties? How should we describe an advocate of land-reform and an anti-landlord orator who had acted as a factor for a leading Scottish landlord? What do we make of a Scottish Home Ruler who was apparently uncritical of a white supremacist government in Africa? Were these personal relationships more important to him than the political complications that they brought? Was Bannerman a serious political figure in Scottish Liberalism, or simply adept at deploying his celebrity to cultivate a personal vote?

Bannerman's sporting prowess was an important factor in his initial rise to political prominence. In 1937, on the occasion of the Glasgow Hillhead by-election, he was considered as a Liberal candidate with much weight given to the fact that he was very well-known from his days as a rugby international, although some leading Liberals doubted whether this was enough to secure him the candidacy in an important by-election. Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Independent Liberals, worried that 'people might listen to him because he plays football well but they would

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[7] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 61–2.
[8] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 81–8.
[9] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 24, see also 15. This is an interesting echo, unconscious perhaps, of the memoir of the son of an Edinburgh Rabbi who would later go on to be a distinguished literary scholar; his book describes the way in which his home life and his school and later university life were conducted in separate realms, see David Daiches, *Two Worlds* (London: Macmillan, 1957).
[10] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 69–75. The friendship was sufficiently close for Bannerman to have been a guest at the Marquess of Graham's wedding at St Giles Cathedral in 1930; *Scotsman*, 21 October 1930, 6.
[11] David Kenrick, *Decolonisation, Identity and Nation in Rhodesia, 1964–1979* (Cham: Springer International, 2019), 108; *Guardian,* 23 December 1962, 5; *Times*, 13 February 1992, 15.

only vote for him if he is in other respects a good and effective candidate'.[12] In the event, there was no Liberal candidate, footballer or not; the seat went to the Unionists and remained with them until Roy Jenkins' famous by-election victory in 1982.

Press coverage of Bannerman's political career was mixed. In 1950, the *Inverness Courier* damned him with faint praise by referring to him as 'the famous footballer who, as an Independent Liberal candidate in Argyll at the last general election, received 3000 votes out of a total poll of 27,000'.[13] Referring to his campaign in Paisley in 1961, the political correspondent of the *Glasgow Herald* touched on this issue in a slightly more positive way: 'Mr Bannerman, the Liberal candidate is – well he is Johnny Bannerman. A rugby player about whose deeds elderly men reminisce with shining eyes…'.[14] At the Scottish Universities by-election in 1946 *The Scotsman* was also rather sceptical: 'His estimable personal qualities and his record as a Rugby player do not quite meet the requirements for a University member'.[15] On other occasions he referred to the matter himself. At Inverness in 1950 he acknowledged that

> he was sometimes referred to as a rugby footballer and a Gaelic singer. He agreed that no man should be returned to Parliament simply because he ran after a football a little bit faster than someone else or because he sang a Gaelic song a little bit louder than somebody else – (laughter) – and it has taken him a long time to convince people that such brains as he did possess were not all centred on his feet – (laughter and applause).[16]

Bannerman's popular appeal was sometimes used by his political opponents to play down the significance of his relative successes. At the Inverness by-election in 1954, the Unionists affected to be unconcerned by his strong showing, and interpreted the result as neither an indication of a Liberal resurgence, nor increased support for Home Rule, but, rather, 'a personal vote, not a political one'.[17]

Although there have been short biographical studies of Bannerman, his political career has not been considered in the round nor studied with a view to addressing wider questions relating to developments in Scottish politics in the period from the 1930s to the 1960s.[18] Some of these questions include the history of Scottish Liberalism in its years of extreme weakness in the decades following the Second World War; the means by which it sought to stay alive, and the battles between different factions for the soul of the party; the way in which Scottish Home Rule was discussed in an era characterised by most historians as one of unionist consensus; the cross-party attempts made to link SNP and Liberal activities in pursuit of Scottish self-government; and, finally, how ideas about the Highland land question developed in the post-war period.

This article will seek to examine these issues through the lens of Bannerman's political career by considering the evidence of his eight by-election and general election campaigns from 1945 to 1964, as well as the speeches he gave in the House of Lords during his short period there prior to

[12] Churchill College, Cambridge, Thurso Mss, THRS II, Box 68 Folder 2, Ranald Finlay to C.J.L. Brock, 13 May 1937; Findlay to Archibald Sinclair, 13 May 1937; Sinclair to Findlay, 14 May 1937.

[13] *Inverness Courier*, 6 January 1950, 2

[14] *Glasgow Herald*, 19 April 1961, 6.

[15] *The Scotsman*, 15 November 1946, 4.

[16] *Inverness Courier*, 7 February 1950, 3.

[17] Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 1/10/567/2, Patrick Blair to Sir Stephen Pierssené, Gen. Dir. Unionist Central Office, London, 29 December 1954.

[18] Richard J. Finlay, 'Bannerman, John Macdonald, Baron Bannerman of Kildonan (1901–1969)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 (online edition, Jan 2012 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/40285]; Alan Massie, *101 Great Scots* (Edinburgh: William Collins, 1987), 289–91; Derick S. Thomson (ed.), *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* (Glasgow, 1994), 27; see also David Torrance, *A History of the Scottish Liberals and Liberal Democrats* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 85–111.

his untimely death in 1968. Bannerman's election campaigns, especially those in Inverness-shire in the 1950s and in Paisley in 1961 and 1964, shed light on how candidates like Bannerman sought to align themselves with the political identities and self-conscious political traditions of different constituencies at this period – such as 'political independence' in Inverness-shire and 'radicalism' in Paisley.

Bannerman's speeches in the Lords portray a slightly different politician from the figure that emerges from his election campaigns. Whereas in his campaigns he relied on his personal appeal rather than on detailed exposition of policy, his addresses to the Lords contain more substance, especially on issues such as the development of the Highlands and Scottish Home Rule. There he was able to use his expertise as a farmer and member of the Forestry Commission to make authoritative, although highly political, statements on such matters.

Bannerman is well remembered in the Scottish political tradition, and has been claimed both by the Liberal Party and their successors as well as by the SNP. In her celebrated speech to the opening session of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, Winifred Ewing sought to establish a pantheon of those who had kept the flame of devolution burning in the long years leading up to 1999, and she included Bannerman in her list of heroes.[19] On other occasions, she and other SNP MSPs referred to Bannerman as they taunted the Scottish Liberal Democrats for their lack of radicalism and their coalition with the Scottish Labour Party, both of which, they argued, would have caused Bannerman and Jo Grimond to 'turn in their graves'.[20] The Scottish Liberal Democrats also, of course, claim Bannerman, not least through the entry in the *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* written by his daughter, Ray Michie, who was MP for Argyll from 1987 to 2001, a seat contested by her father in 1945.[21] Indeed, in her maiden speech in the House of Commons she remarked:

> I was born and brought up in the Liberal faith and philosophy and I owe my success in large part to the continuing example and inspiration of my father – the late Lord Bannerman of Kildonan. Better known in Scotland, in politics, in international rugby and in Gaeldom as Johnnie Bannerman, he cut his political teeth in Argyll at the 1945 general election.[22]

To what extent, then, does Bannerman's political career help us to explain these contested political memories?

Bannerman and Scottish Home Rule

Although all of Bannerman's post-war election campaigns were in the name of the Scottish Liberal Party, he first entered the political limelight in the inter-war period among the diverse groups in Scottish nationalist politics. He subscribed to the National Party of Scotland (NPS) in 1929 when he first became seriously interested in politics.[23] In his memoirs, Bannerman recalled that it was 'the spectacle of shameful unemployment' and the massive emigration of the 1920s which took him into politics.[24] His first public activity was in support of John MacCormick's nationalist candidature in Inverness-shire in 1935.[25] MacCormick, for whom Bannerman had a very high regard, would later be a close colleague in the task of modernising Scottish Liberalism in the 1940s and 1950s.

[19] *Official Report of the Scottish Parliament*, 12 May 1999; Winnie Ewing, *Stop the World: The Autobiography of Winnie Ewing*, ed. Michael Russell (Edinburgh, 2004), 90, 291.

[20] *Official Report of the Scottish Parliament*, 19 May 1999 (Alex Neil); 28 Feb 2002 (Winnie Ewing); 7 May 2002 (Alex Neil).

[21] Duncan Brack (ed.), *Dictionary of Liberal Biography* (London: Politico, 1998), 27–9.

[22] *House of Commons Debates*, 6th ser., vol. 119, col. 716, 13 July 1987.

[23] Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland [NLS], Scottish Secretariat, Acc. 3721/1/12, Roland Muirhead to Bannerman, 9 May 1929.

[24] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 97.

[25] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 97–9; J. M. MacCormick, *The Flag in the Wind: The Story of the National Movement in Scotland* (London: Gollancz, 1955), 88–9.

In the 1930s, however, Bannerman was more active in the Scottish Party, founded in 1932 as a right-wing antidote to what it perceived as leftist and impractical tendencies in the NPS. Bannerman's link with the Scottish Party may well have come about through his connections to the sixth Duke of Montrose, a leading Scottish Party figure. The Scottish Party originated when a Glasgow Solicitor, J. Kevan MacDowall, and others resigned from the Unionist Association of Cathcart (on the south side of Glasgow) in 1932, and coalesced with other right-wing nationalists including Andrew Dewar Gibb, Regius Professor of Law at the University of Glasgow, and George Malcolm Thomson, a journalist and close advisor of Lord Beaverbrook, in advocating a nationalism which would restore Scotland to its rightful place at the heart of the British Empire.[26] This imperialist nationalism would counteract leftist and cultural-nationalist tendencies in the National Party of Scotland.[27]

Bannerman became involved in a controversy over a by-election at Kilmarnock in 1933, when it seemed likely at one point that there would be a disastrous contest between NPS and Scottish Party candidates. Bannerman was proposed as a possible joint candidate, but it has been argued that his associations with the Scottish Party damned him in the eyes of leading members of the NPS. In the event, the Provost of Inverness, Sir Alexander MacEwen, emerged as a joint candidate.[28] The purging of the NPS of its 'extremist' elements in 1933 led to the creation of the SNP in 1934, and future crises, such as that which threatened at Kilmarnock, were avoided.

In this period there was much crossover between the Liberal Party and the Scottish nationalists. MacEwen had close links to the Liberals, as did Bannerman, and the Liberals had a long tradition of support for Scottish Home Rule. At the same time, although there was crossover in personnel, the relationship between the Liberals and the SNP was uneasy. Leading Liberals felt that the SNP did not give them enough credit for their advocacy of Scottish Home Rule. By September 1937, after giving reassurances that he was not a 'Simonite' (after Sir John Simon, who led the Liberals who entered the National Government in 1931) and was willing to support 'Samuelite' (after Herbert Samuel, who led the Liberals who left the National Government in 1932) positions on free trade, Bannerman was adopted as the Liberal candidate in Argyll.[29] Ranald Findlay, a leading Liberal organiser, reported Bannerman having said that

> if he fights Argyllshire he would like to concentrate as far as possible on our Liberal policy for dealing with the domestic problems of the highlands and islands. He would not, of course, neglect wider issues, but he feels that as a candidate and possibly later as a Member with his already well-established connections with the Highland movement, his advocacy of our policy would carry weight and perhaps produce results.[30]

Perhaps a better opening for Bannerman was the prospect of his being adopted as a joint Liberal/SNP candidate at the Argyll by-election in the spring of 1940. This was a period of electoral truce between the main parties that was generally observed by the Liberals. Bannerman's appearance, under a partial SNP banner in a constituency in which his Gaelic identity would have

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[26] George McKechnie, *George Malcolm Thomson, The Best-Hated Man: Intellectuals and the Condition of Scotland Between the Wars* (Glendaruel: Argyll Publishing, 2013), 151–65.

[27] Richard. J. Finlay, '"For or against?": Scottish nationalists and the British Empire', *Scottish Historical Review*, 71 (1992), 184–206.

[28] Richard J. Finlay, *Independent and Free: Scottish Politics and the Origins of the Scottish National Party, 1918–1945* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1994), 143.

[29] Churchill College, Cambridge, Thurso Mss, THRS II, Box 74, Folder 2, Findlay to Sinclair, 19 July 1937, 13 August 1937, 6 September 1937. For a summary of factional divisions within the Liberal Party, a useful timeline of the party's history can be found here (https://libdemnewswire.com/short-history-liberal-sdp-liberal-democrats/, accessed 27 Oct 2024).

[30] Churchill College, Cambridge, Thurso Mss, THRS II, Box 74, Folder 2, Findlay to Sinclair, 10 September 1937.

played strongly, would have allowed the Liberals to have a role in the election without seeming to have broken the truce. At the time, the Argyll seat was held by a Conservative, Frederick MacQuisten. When he died in 1940, the terms of the wartime truce dictated that he be succeeded by a Tory. Bannerman later recalled that he was invited by leading Tories in the county to succeed MacQuisten on the condition that he became a National Liberal, which he declined to do.[31] In the event there was too much Liberal wariness of the SNP, and William Power emerged as an SNP candidate. His performance in a straight fight with a Unionist was the best result yet for a nationalist candidate, and foreshadowed other good wartime performances for the party at Kirkcaldy in 1944 and Motherwell in 1945, where Dr Robert MacIntyre was victorious.

Bannerman's career, therefore, raises the topic of relations between the Liberals and the SNP.[32] As Scottish politics came to be contested almost exclusively by Labour and the Unionists, the Liberals – with their long-standing commitment to Scottish Home Rule – and the SNP seemed often to be in pursuit of the same voters, and experienced similar difficulties in breaking into the duopoly. Both parties tended to perform best outside the industrial central belt; and when they experienced relative electoral success in the 1960s and 1970s, the north and north-east of Scotland were areas of strength.[33] Despite some elements of commonality in their outlook, however, relations between the two parties were often tense. In the 1930s, the correspondence of Liberal Party leader Sir Archibald Sinclair is replete with expressions of irritation at the SNP. In a letter of 1935 to Daniel Stevenson his annoyance was plain:

> Quite frankly I think the Scottish nationalists are difficult people to deal with. Not only have the Liberal party done all the spade work for Home Rule but in recent years and months they have given much help to the National party … The only response from the Nationalists has been vehement attacks in letters to the newspapers and declarations that I had no right to pledge the support of the Liberal Party for Scottish Home Rule.[34]

The Liberals and the SNP made a number of attempts to resolve the differences between them. During the war, negotiations began with a joint meeting in September 1941 at which 'every aspect of propaganda for self-government for Scotland was discussed …'.[35] Little came of this activity, however. More significant was the 'National' candidacy of John MacCormick at Paisley in 1948, although this caused significant controversy in the Liberal Party.[36] Further fruitless contact in 1955 between the Liberals, the SNP and MacCormick's Scottish Covenant Association resulted in the Liberal Executive Committee, with Bannerman in the Chair, agreeing that a line be drawn under the matter.[37] In the 1960s tensions arose again, first in 1964 when the SNP asked if the Liberals would prioritise Scottish Home Rule as a first step towards a new relationship between the two parties. Bannerman argued strongly that the Liberals were part of a wider UK organisation and could not take this step. Later in the decade, proposals put forward by Jo Grimond to tryst with the

[31] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 99.
[32] Torrance, *Scottish Liberals,* 100–6.
[33] Indeed, it might be said that it was the Scottish Parliament election of 2011 before this pattern in the SNP vote was broken. This election also saw a decisive break in the pattern of the 'Liberal' vote in Scotland in that the Liberal Democrats won no constituency seats on the Scottish mainland!
[34] Churchill College, Cambridge, Thurso Mss, Sinclair to Daniel Stevenson, 22 February 1935.
[35] NLS, Acc. 12509/10, Minutes of the National Council of the SNP, 4 October 1941.
[36] Michael Dyer, '"A nationalist in the Churchillian sense": John MacCormick, the Paisley by-election of 18 February 1948, home rule and the crisis in Scottish Liberalism', *Parliamentary History*, 22 (2003), 285–307; Torrance, *Scottish Liberals*, 93.
[37] NLS, Acc. 11765/57, Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Scottish Liberal Party, 8 November 1955.

Nationalists stimulated vociferous opposition from Russell Johnston, Liberal MP for Inverness-shire.[38]

Even so, Bannerman did advocate Scottish Home Rule in his election campaigns; indeed, it was his emphasis, along with that of Jo Grimond, on this issue which helped to continue the Scottish Liberal tradition of support for self-government. The importance of Home Rule for Bannerman was evident during his by-election campaign in Inverness in 1954, when he had the vocal support of John M. MacCormick and other leaders of the Scottish Covenant Association – much to the displeasure of the *Inverness Courier*, the main local newspaper, and one which had endorsed him in 1950.[39] The venerable *Courier* railed against Scottish Home Rule as a distraction from important national and international issues.[40] Indeed, Bannerman gave so much attention to the issue in this campaign that one of his supporters had to write to the press to counter the notion that Bannerman was a Scottish nationalist and to emphasise that, as a Liberal, he favoured Home Rule and not separation.[41] Bannerman himself confirmed his position during a campaign speech at Argyll in 1945, where he defined his belief in Home Rule by invoking the spirit of Thomas Johnston – the wartime Secretary of State for Scotland and a figure with cross-party appeal – with his combination of general support for Home Rule and his use of wartime conditions to increase the level of Scottish autonomy over certain domestic issues.[42]

Although Bannerman gave prominence to the Home Rule issue in other campaigns in Inverness at the general elections of 1955 and 1959, the by-election conditions and the prominence of the Covenant Movement meant that it became a headline feature in 1954; so much so, in fact, that Bannerman's campaign attracted a supportive, if somewhat overexcited, article in the *Scots Independent* (an SNP newspaper), which argued that it 'pointed the way to Scottish independence' and was 'a milestone for the National movement'.[43] In the Highlands, the newspaper of the Covenant movement published a tribute to Bannerman which lauded his fight against 'English-controlled' party machines and 'far-off Government Departments'.[44]

Bannerman sought to make Home Rule central to his Liberalism, advocating federalism as a means of controlling one's own destiny in national as well as individual terms.[45] A prominent theme in his later public speeches was the extent to which Scottish Home rule could help to develop Scotland, and by implication the United Kingdom as a whole, transforming it from a 'sleeping partner' to a 'working partner' by countering the centralisation of power at Westminster.[46] Bannerman's espousal of federalism demonstrated the widening gap between his own thinking and that of the SNP, which had just won a spectacular by-election victory at Hamilton and was becoming much clearer and more confident in its advocacy of unqualified independence. The SNP's support for independence at this time not only diverged markedly from the Home Rule endorsed by John MacCormick, but also contrasted with the pragmatism of the SNP itself in the 1930s – the

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[38] Graham Watson, 'Scottish Liberals, Scottish Nationalists and Dreams of a Common Front', *Journal of Liberal History*, 22 (Spring, 1999), 3–12; NLS, Acc. 11765/55, Minutes of the General Council of the Scottish Liberal party, 4 June 1966, 3 September 1966.

[39] *Inverness Courier*, 17 Dec. 1954, 8 for an account of a meeting in Inverness at which MacCormick and Grimond spoke in support of Bannerman and emphasised the importance of the Home Rule issue.

[40] *Inverness Courier*, 10 December 1954, 7; 17 December 1954, 6;

[41] *Inverness Courier*, 21 December 1954, 3 for a letter from Kenneth Fraser, Chairman of the Scottish Liberal Association.

[42] *Oban Times,* 16 June 1945, 3.

[43] *Scots Independent*, 1 January 1955, 1.

[44] *Highlands and Islands Covenanter*, July 1950, back page (I found this publication among the papers of Dr Robert MacIntyre: NLS, Acc. 10090/187).

[45] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 287, col. 708, 6 December 1967.

[46] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser., vol.288, col. 735, 30 January 1968.

period of Bannerman's flirtation with it – when phrases such as 'independence in the Empire', or even 'independence in the United Kingdom', had been used.[47]

Despite Bannerman's strong performance as a Liberal supporter of Scottish devolution, his ultimate failure to be elected also reminds us that the condition of Scottish politics in this period was not only strongly unionist but also strongly 'British', with the consequence that it was very difficult for Liberal or SNP candidates to credibly demand Home Rule for Scotland. The apparent success of the Covenant Movement led by John MacCormick is perhaps deceptive here.[48] Although 2 million Scots signed up to the rather vague and general expressions of the Covenant, a more significant statistic is that over 95 percent of Scots voted for Labour or the Unionists in the 1950s, with the Unionists and National Liberals gaining 50.1 percent of the popular vote in 1955. In this unionist age, the Labour party were the more centralist, the Unionists adopting a line of argument, perhaps opportunistic, that Labour policies such as the nationalisation of key industries were anti-Scottish because they concentrated power in London. The Unionists' answer, however, was to augment administrative devolution and invest in the infrastructure of transport and housing.[49] In this context it was very difficult for any supporter of Home Rule, even a strong candidate such as Bannerman, to prosper at elections.

Bannerman and Scottish Liberalism

There was another problem for Bannerman which persisted for most of his political career: the state of the Liberal Party in Scotland. This was a party which had once dominated Scottish politics. Between 1832 and 1910 there was only one election – 1900 – at which the party did not win a majority of Scottish seats. The recovery from 1900 was rapid and, in contrast to the position in England, sustained through the two general elections of 1910. At the outbreak of war in 1914, the party held fifty-nine of the seventy Scottish seats.

The wartime period and the inter-war years, however, brought division and difficulty for the party as it saw electoral support leaking to the Unionists and Labour and the seeming irrelevance of free trade, land reform and international cooperation – its main political ideas. With wartime divisions never properly healed, new divisions emerged over support for the National Government in 1931–2.

By 1932 there were at least two Liberal factions due to the emergence of the National, or 'Simonite', Liberals, who supported the National Government established in 1931. The bitter relations that existed between the two factions were clearly seen in Dingle Foot's description of the National Liberals as 'Vichy Liberals'. The 1930s were extremely difficult for the 'Samuelite' Liberals who sought an independent existence, outside the National Government, as their fortunes declined even in areas of former relative strength for the Liberal party, such as rural Scotland. In the Ross and Cromarty by-election of 1936, difficulty finding a candidate for a seat which had been continuously Liberal since 1832 presaged a very weak performance in an election won by Malcolm MacDonald for National Labour.[50]

With the Liberals observing the electoral truce during the Second World War, Bannerman stood aside in Argyll in 1940.[51] Emerging from the 1945 election with no seats in Scotland, the

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[47] Finlay, *Independent and Free*, 162–99.

[48] Malcolm Petrie, 'John MacCormick', in James Mitchell and Gerry Hassan (eds), *Scottish National Party Leaders* (London: Biteback, 2016), 57–61.

[49] Ewen A. Cameron, '*The Bulletin,* "Londonisation" and Scottish politics in the 1940s and 1950s', *Scottish Historical Review*, 103 (2024), 156–77; Ewen A. Cameron, 'The politics of the Union in an age of Unionism, 1920 to 1960' in T.M. Devine (ed.), *Scotland and the Union, 1707 to 2007* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 123–39.

[50] Ewen A. Cameron, 'Rival foundlings: the Ross and Cromarty by-election of February 1936', *Historical Research*, 81 (2008), 507–30; see also n. 29 above.

[51] *The Scotsman*, 2 March 1940, 8; 4 March 1940, 5; 30 March 1940, 11; Fowler, *Bannerman*, 99.

Liberal Party faced very difficult conditions as, despite desultory attempts to reunite the factions, the National Liberals moved ever closer to the Conservatives and acted in concert with them at elections.[52] Thus the post-war Liberal context in which Bannerman was fighting was a very difficult one, in which the party struggled to find its identity. Was it a progressive party or an 'anti-socialist' party? Was there, frankly, a future for an independent Liberal Party in this period when the Unionists and Labour were so dominant?

There was, however, a deeper problem for the Liberals. If they were to base their appeal on anti-socialism, which they did in their emphasis on the individual and their opposition to nationalisation, they faced the problem of competing with the Unionists for the anti-socialist vote – a contest which they could only lose, given the gulf in resources and the extent to which the Unionists had a well-worked out position on these questions.[53] Indeed, the Unionists refused even to refer to 'Labour', with officials urging Unionist candidates to use the term 'socialist' to 'debunk "Labour"'.[54] Bannerman's attempt to combine support for Scottish Home Rule with an anti-socialist position met with some success, but not enough to win him a seat. The dramatic decline of a once hegemonic party in Scotland is demonstrable from party records: in December 1946 a thirty-seater coach had been hired to take delegates from the East of Scotland to the meeting of the General Council at Perth – but the booking had to be cancelled as only eight seats were reserved![55]

At this low point, the party relied on a small group of committed activists, with John MacCormick, Lady Glen-Coats and John Bannerman among the most prominent. Indeed, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, there was an internal debate about the future of the party and an attempt to reconstitute and re-launch the party with a clearer Scottish identity.[56] An *ad hoc* committee, established under the convenorship of John MacCormick, recommended a new constitution for a reorganised party to be known as the 'Scottish Liberal Party', rather than the archaic 'Scottish Liberal Federation'. The renaming was an attempt to rebuild the Liberal party after the defeat at the general election of 1945, and to recognise that the old assumption that there were active Liberals in associations all over Scotland was no longer relevant.[57] During this debate, Bannerman took the view that an inclusive approach – 'a drive to bring in those people who have been alienated or in the wilderness from Liberalism' – should be a central element of the reconstituted Scottish party.[58] In attempting to establish the identity of the party in 1946, policy resolutions were drafted under Bannerman's guidance which sought to adhere to traditional Liberal principles while ensuring their relevance in the current political context. Devolution was thus presented as an antidote to the centralisation brought about by the nationalisation of industry (an argument also used by Unionists at this time), and policies on 'decentralisation' and 'bureaucratic control' were refashioned to take account of the terms of political debate in the post-war period:

> The Liberal Party in Scotland believe there exists a grave danger to the community in the ideas underlying all proposals for a so-called planned economy. Such proposals will place in the hands of Government departments the power to control the whole life of the community,

[52] Michael Dyer, 'The evolution of the Centre-right and the state of Scottish Conservatism', *Political Studies,* 49 (2002), 42.

[53] Malcolm Petrie, *Politics and the People: Scotland, 1945–79* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 26–32; Cameron, '*The Bulletin,* "Londonisation" and Scottish politics in the 1940s and 1950s', 156–77.

[54] Bodleian Library, Conservative Party Archive, CCO 2/1/17, Memorandum from Col Blair, to Scottish candidates and election agents, 13 February 1950.

[55] NLS, Acc. 11765/53, Minutes of the General Council, 7 December 1946

[56] Torrance, *Scottish Liberals,* 84–8.

[57] NLS, Acc. 11765/14/330–8, Meeting of the Executive, 21 Nov. 1945; 11765/14/354, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Liberal Federation, 15 March 1946.

[58] NLS, Acc. 11765/14/348, Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Scottish Liberal Federation, 15 March 1946.

> and to dictate the conditions under which individuals will live. With this danger in view, we urge the removal of the restrictions upon Enterprise, Production and Trade, and the return of the government to its proper role of guaranteeing equality of opportunity to all citizens.[59]

Despite its concerted effort to re-brand, the party faced considerable difficulties in this period. Not only was money extremely tight, but the party's reliance on a core group of activists placed an enormous personal burden on people like MacCormick, Bannerman and the redoubtable (and wealthy) Lady Glen-Coats. Of further – and more fundamental – concern was the condition of Scottish politics in this period. Although the Liberals attempted to counter the arguments of the dominant Labour government, they struggled to assert their political identity in a period when only a relatively small number of Liberal candidates could be found, the Scottish Unionist Party advocated similar ideas on decentralisation, and the Liberals' anti-socialist message was effectively drowned out.[60]

Addressing questions about the Liberal Party's purpose and identity were central to its efforts to restore its position on the Scottish political landscape. Some of these problems can be seen in Bannerman's by-election campaign for the Scottish Universities' seat in 1946. Having first been approached to stand as an independent candidate, he declined, stating that he preferred to stand as a Liberal. Despite the fact that this election, occasioned by the resignation of John Boyd Orr, took place in the midst of reunion negotiations with the Liberal Nationals, the picture was complicated by the Liberal Nationals themselves putting forward a candidate – Robert Scott Stevenson, who came fifth. Nevertheless, Bannerman was clear that it was important for the Liberals to stand in order to try to establish their identity: 'we in Scotland have to make our stand for pure Liberalism and the sooner we do it the better'[61]. He later added that 'he would stand as a pure Liberal and that he would be diametrically opposed to Liberal-Nationalism and all it stands for', making clear that this, to him, was more important than Liberal reunion.[62] Given the weakness of the Liberals at this time, although this might have been difficult to assess in the rather unusual electorate in the Universities seat, it was felt that Bannerman was merely a 'candidate for a consolation prize'.[63] Despite his strong criticism of the Tories and advocacy for a Scottish Parliament, Bannerman was heavily defeated in an election won by former Secretary of State for Scotland, Walter Elliot.[64] In the aftermath, Bannerman was quoted in *The Scotsman*:

> I am aware that the Tory Party, shocked by its own defeat, is now beginning to adopt many of the proposals of the Liberals … But it is the same old Tory party which by its reactionary policies when in power, made inevitable the landslide towards Socialism. Unless its new found and still very tentative approach towards a more Liberal outlook is hastened by the return of independent Liberals to Parliament, there is little hope that this country will be saved from the totalitarianism which is the ultimate goal of state socialism.[65]

Interestingly, in this comment Bannerman not only asserted the intellectual vitality of Liberalism but also tried to establish the independence of the Liberal message. Although he emphasised anti-socialism, he was equally critical of the Unionists and implicitly rejected the notion of independent

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[59] NLS, Acc. 11765/14/349-50, Minute of the Meeting of the Resolutions Committee, 15 February 1946.

[60] Ewen A. Cameron, *Impaled on a Thistle: Scotland since 1880* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 271–7; Matthew Cragoe, '"We like local patriotism": the Conservative party and the discourse of decentralisation, 1947–51', *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), 965–85.

[61] NLS, Acc. 11765/56, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 8 October 1946.

[62] NLS, Acc. 11765/56, Minutes of the Executive Committee, 1 November 1946; Torrance, *Scottish Liberals,* 89.

[63] *The Scotsman*, 15 November 1946, 4.

[64] *The Scotsman*, 15 November 1946, 6.

[65] *The Scotsman*, 15 Nov. 1946, 6.

Liberalism as part of an anti-socialist coalition – a grouping in which the Liberals could only ever be a junior and faintly heard partner.

These issues were evident throughout Bannerman's political career, but perhaps especially so in the 1950s. In his first campaign in Inverness in 1950, the identity of Liberalism was an issue. There was no incumbent; Sir Murdoch MacDonald, who had held the seat since 1922, had eventually retired – and decided to endorse Bannerman as his replacement. This was an interesting development for several reasons. MacDonald had been one of the first Liberals to go into the opposition lobby along with Sir John Simon in 1931, and he had been part of the 'secret conclave' of twenty-two 'Simonite Liberals' in October 1931.[66] In 1942, he resigned from the Liberal National group and stood in the 1945 election as an 'Independent Liberal pledged to support Mr Churchill', thereby avoiding the complication of a Conservative opponent.[67]

In 1950 Bannerman, although clearly an independent Liberal 'without prefix or suffix', presented himself first and foremost as an anti-socialist candidate. His campaign emphasised his opposition to nationalisation, his support for privatisation of the iron and steel industry, and his belief in making the 'fullest use of private enterprise in rehousing the people'.[68] MacDonald supported him, despite the fact that he deplored Bannerman's commitment to Scottish Home Rule. *The Inverness Courier*, despite worrying that the anti-socialist vote (there was a strong Labour candidate in 1950) would be split, saw Bannerman as the most likely candidate to defeat the Socialist, and they were pleased that he had given a 'solemn pledge that he is utterly opposed to Socialism and to further nationalisation and that he would not be party to placing the Socialists back in power, and no anti-socialist vote would be wasted if it is cast for him'.[69] In the end, however, the contest was won by the Unionist, Sir Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton, while Bannerman came bottom of the poll, although with a relatively healthy twenty-two percent of the vote.

When Douglas-Hamilton resigned four years later, Bannerman stood in the 1954 Inverness by-election, where he gained thirty-six percent of the vote. In the General Election the following year, he won thirty-eight percent of the vote, cutting the Unionist majority to less than a thousand; Bannerman ascribed his defeat to the 'impersonal fanatical' use by the Unionists of the postal vote – which amounted to 1,079. As many party historians have recognised, Bannerman's performances in these two elections, in which he campaigned on the issue of Home Rule, were striking in a very difficult period for the Liberals.[70] Bannerman's success was also heralded at the time by Liberal newspapers, although it was noted that his personality, suitability for the particular constituency and 'championship of Scottish Home Rule' were not features that could be repeated, or that readily translated to other seats.[71]

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[66] David Dutton, *Liberals in Schism: A History of the National Liberal Party* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 34, 39–40

[67] *The Times*, 18 Mar. 1942, 8; Dutton, *Liberals in Schism*, 135; James Miller, *Inverness* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2004), 284, 303, 310; Dyer, 'The evolution of the Centre-right', 42.

[68] *Inverness Courier*, 7 February 1950, 3.

[69] *Inverness Courier*, 21 February 1950, 2; see also 13 January 1950, 4; 24 January 1950, 2; 31 January 1950, 2; 7 February 1950, 2; 14 February 1950, 2; this election was a further occasion in the long-running political battle in Inverness between *The Inverness Courier*, a newspaper with a Liberal tradition, and the *Northern Chronicle* which had been established as a Conservative title in 1881; see Ewen A. Cameron, 'John Murdoch, Duncan Campbell and Victorian journalism in the Highlands of Scotland', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 40 (2007), 281–306; and Ewen A. Cameron, 'Radicalism and Conservatism in the press of the Scottish Highlands: the *Highlander* and the *Northern Chronicle*', *Northern Scotland*, 27 (2007), 117–29.

[70] Roy Douglas, *Liberals: The History of the Liberal and Liberal Democrat Parties* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2005), 260; David Dutton, *A History of the Liberal Party* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 181; Alun Wyburn-Powell, 'The Inverness Turning-Point', *Journal of Liberal History*, 53 (Winter, 2006–7), 18-25.

[71] *Manchester Guardian*, 24 December 1954, 1.

In the 1960s, the question of Liberal identity became more straightforward as the post-war period progressed and the National Liberals moved closer to the Unionists, with whom they formally merged in 1968.[72] Indeed, by the time of Bannerman's campaigns in Paisley in 1961 and 1964, the Unionist consensus was beginning to fray at the edges as the SNP and Liberals placed more candidates and secured a number of better results.[73] This period saw a number of spectacular Liberal victories at by-elections, notably Torrington in Devon and Orpington in Kent in 1962. These, and other good performances, heralded talk of a 'Liberal revival' prior to the 1964 election.[74]

In the Paisley by-election of 1961, Bannerman himself stood following the last-moment withdrawal of the established candidate. As Chairman of the Scottish Liberal Party, he had advocated a policy of fighting by-elections, and felt that he should intervene rather than see the seat uncontested by a Liberal.[75] Nevertheless, even in this slightly different context, Liberal intervention was seen not on its own terms but perceived as a possible distorting factor. Under the headline, 'Will Labour dissidents help to return a Unionist?', the political correspondent of the *Glasgow Herald* argued that votes for Bannerman could potentially erode the Labour vote and lead to the return of a Unionist in a seat with a strong Liberal tradition and a recent history of Labour representation.[76]

In this election, Bannerman's message was that the Unionists were failing Scottish voters. Harold MacMillan's optimistic economic rhetoric was viewed with scepticism in Scotland, where unemployment was creeping up, although still low by the standards of the 1930s or the 1980s. The Unionists were dogged by opposition to recent budget proposals raising payroll tax and increasing the rate of the surtax – issues which allowed Bannerman to argue that the Unionists were discriminating against Scotland. Mrs Thatcher (elected two years earlier as MP for Finchley) might have taken note of this Paisley campaign, where the Unionists were drawing criticism for overseeing a revaluation of rateable values that was unique to Scotland.[77] These issues have generally been accepted as explaining a very poor showing by the Unionists, whose support slumped to 13.2 percent of the vote, compared to 42.7 percent at the 1959 General Election two years earlier. Labour held the seat, but Bannerman surged to a very strong second place with 41.4 percent. He stood again at the General Election of 1964, once more coming second with a highly respectable 33.9 percent of the vote.[78]

An examination of Bannerman's Liberalism allows us to gain a better understanding of the party's slow progress in the period from 1945 to the mid-1960s. Recovering from the splits of the inter-war period, the Liberal Party began to assert a more straightforward political identity as the Liberal Nationals withered and moved closer to the Conservatives, and as Jo Grimond presided over an increase in the party's vitality. Bannerman was certainly in the vanguard of this movement in Scotland, especially with his striking results in Inverness in 1954 – by far the best performance in a post-war by-election up to that date – and Paisley in 1961.

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[72] Graham D. Goodlad, 'The Liberal-Nationals, 1931–40: the problems of a party in "partnership government"', *Historical Journal*, 38 (1995), 133–43; David Dutton, 'Sir John Simon and the post-war National Liberal Party: an historical postscript', *Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), 357–67.

[73] Petrie, *Politics and the People*, 55–66.

[74] Ken Young, 'Orpington and the "Liberal revival"', in Chris Cook and John Ramsden (eds), *By-elections in British Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 157–79; Pippa Norris, 'The rise (and fall?) of multi-party by-election politics', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 44 (1991), 298–310.

[75] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 112–13.

[76] *Glasgow Herald*, 19 April 1961, 6.

[77] *Glasgow Herald*, 17 April 1961, 7.

[78] Paisley was won by the Labour candidate, John Robertson, who held the seat until 1979 although he resigned from the Labour party in 1976 and participated with Jim Sillars in the quasi-nationalist Scottish Labour Party, which was critical of the weakness of Labour's devolution plans.

In the 1960s and 1970s, signs of Liberal recovery began to yield more tangible results with the General Elections of 1964 and 1966 and by-elections of this period, although the Liberal gains in Ross-shire and Caithness and Sutherland were short-lived. Russell Johnston, however, took Inverness in 1964 and held it until his retirement in 1997. More progress was made in the complicated elections of 1974, although the SNP stole some of the third-party thunder on that occasion as their vote grew to over thirty percent.

Bannerman and the Highlands

A final area to examine is the extent to which Bannerman contributed to the debate on the position of the Highlands in a period when that issue was not so prominent as it had been in earlier periods of Scottish politics. In the 1940s and 1950s, Bannerman strongly emphasised his Gaelic identity in Argyll and Inverness, often making speeches and, no doubt, interacting with individual voters in Gaelic. His campaigns included ceilidhs at which he performed – a feature occasionally sneered at by his opponents in the press in Inverness-shire and by metropolitan political commentators. To the extent that Liberalism survived in Scotland after 1918, the Highlands were an important area of support, although, as we have seen, even here the party faced difficulties following the creation of the National Government and the disastrous election of 1935.

In the election of 1950, when the *Inverness Courier* supported Bannerman as the strongest anti-socialist candidate – and this was crucial in understanding politics in this period – the paper attempted to argue that Inverness-shire had a strong Liberal tradition. While it was the case that Murdoch MacDonald had held the seat since 1922 under every conceivable Liberal label – Coalition Liberal (at his by-election victory just before the collapse of the coalition), National Liberal, Liberal (National Liberal), National Liberal, National Liberal (Independent Liberal) and, in 1945, Independent Liberal – the *Courier* was slightly disingenuous in making this claim, referring in a rather literal way only to the seat as it was then constituted, taking the tradition back only to 1918, and avoiding some inconvenient Conservative representation in earlier periods. Characterising the Tories as agents of the landlords who had despoiled the Highlands in the nineteenth century, the paper asserted that

> in the eyes of the average crofter and country dweller throughout the Highland area generally, and in Inverness-shire in particular, the word Tory is synonymous with the landlords who evicted thousands of Highland people in order to make way for sheep, deer and grouse.[79]

Justifying its support for Bannerman's candidacy as far preferable to that of the Unionist, the *Courier* argued:

> We ourselves object particularly to his Home Rule views, but these are of not the slightest practical importance at the present time and can safely be ignored. On the other hand Mr Bannerman is a good Highlander with a first-hand knowledge of Highland conditions and Highland problems, and from the purely Highland point of view, therefore, much more suited to represent a Highland constituency in the House of Commons than his Tory opponent, Lord Malcolm Douglas Hamilton.[80]

At other points Highland traditions of political representation were used against Bannerman, not least in his 1954 and 1955 campaigns, in which he advocated Scottish Home Rule. On these occasions, the *Courier* argued that centralisation of power in Edinburgh would be even worse for the Highlands than centralisation of power in London. Highland MPs would be significantly outnumbered, and would lose out to Lowland Scottish interests in a way that did not happen in

[79] *Inverness Courier*, 17 February 1950, 4.
[80] *Inverness Courier*, 31 January 1950, 2.

London. Similar arguments had been used against the home-rule supporting Crofter MPs in the 1885 and 1886 elections.[81]

The *Courier* occasionally appeared to change its mind. Having criticised 'Tory' opposition to the hydro-schemes in the 1930s, the paper later embraced the Unionists when they seemed the likelier anti-socialist vehicle, describing the wartime coalition as a Conservative-led government that had delivered important improvements to the Highlands – such as the creation of the Hydro-Board. As regards Scotland and the Highlands in particular, the paper drew a distinction between 'bigotted Tories' who disparaged the Highlands, and the 'Unionists as a whole', who did not – an interesting reminder that the nomenclature of the Scottish Unionist Party, devoid of the 'Conservative' label, could be useful in Scotland.[82]

The *Courier*'s apparent tergiversations can be understood by thinking about the power of anti-socialism in Scottish politics at this time. In the 1950s, the paper's commitment to anti-socialism informed their deep veneration for Churchill and his Cold-War politics. In 1954, Bannerman was problematic for them because a strong vote for him risked a Socialist victory on a minority poll. Conversely, in Paisley in 1961 and 1964 Bannerman was standing as a candidate for a seat with a very conscious radical heritage going back to the nineteenth century – hence the worry for Labour supporters that Bannerman's intervention in 1961 would lead to a Unionist victory.[83] In an age of two-party politics, the Liberal Party's third-party status was a perennial problem for them. It would be the 1970s, when they were able to field candidates in every seat, before they gained national credibility.

Bannerman's political career straddled an interesting period in the history of government policy for the Highlands, and his ideas about how to deal with the Highland problem were the subject of many of his speeches in his brief period in the House of Lords. In the 1940s, he had actively supported the Knoydart land raiders who, in 1948, had sought to draw attention not only to the egregious landlordism of Lord Brocket, but also to the Labour Party's neglect of the Highland land question.[84] Bannerman used the Knoydart episode to illustrate his points about the neglect of the Highlands and the extent to which centralisation of government meant that 'the injustice continues towards the remoter areas'.[85] But while Liberals like Bannerman and nationalists like Robert Macintyre used the raid to argue that the land-settlement policies of the inter-war period ought to be revived, this was never likely to happen. Official thinking about the Highlands had changed profoundly since the 1930s, shifting away from land-tenure-based policies in favour of ideas that supported the diversification of the region's economy.[86] In an interesting speech in the House of Lords in February 1968, Bannerman asked about the extent of land settlement in the period since

[81] *Inverness* Courier, 21 December 1954, 2; 26 November 1885, 4; for a later generation of Liberals involved in devolution campaigns a proportional voting system for a Scottish parliament was the answer to this problem, see Charles Kennedy, 'The Highland question', in Owen Dudley Edwards (ed.), *A Claim of Right for Scotland* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989), 89-90. Highland anti-devolution sentiment was prominent in the campaign for devolution in the 1974-9 period, notably in the *West Highland Free Press* (see 1 December 1978, 19 January, 16 February, 16 March 1979) owned and edited by Brian Wilson, a Labour MP from 1987 to 2005.

[82] *Inverness Courier*, 31 January 1950, 2; 'Tory Lords and Highland People', *Inverness Courier*, 3 February 1950, 4.

[83] Catriona M. M. MacDonald, *The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland, Paisley Politics, 1885 to 1924*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001).

[84] Ewen A. Cameron, 'The Seven Men of Knoydart and the Scottish Highlands in the 1940s', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness,* 62 (2001–3), 156–83

[85] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 124.

[86] Ewen A. Cameron, *Land for the People? The British Government and the Scottish Highlands, c. 1880–1925* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1996), 191–204.

1945, and was informed that the number of people settled on the four estates which the government had acquired since 1945 was thirty-four. Bannerman responded:

> May I ask the noble Lord whether the Government consider that this is a record to be proud of – 34 people settled on an area of land which is half the size of Scotland: 9 million acres? And have they still the same policy they had in 1947, when seven crofters of Moidart (sic) asked for one extra acre and the Government were unsympathetic.

Lord Hughes' response indicated the extent to which the Labour government were determined to implement what they saw as 'modern' policies (even if their roots lay in the 1930s). He suggested that land settlement, as a policy, was 'not valid', and that the government did not 'rely on methods which had proved a failure in the past'.[87]

The Labour government which had returned to power in 1964 was quick to demonstrate its commitment to economic change in the Highlands by establishing the Highlands and Islands Development Board in 1965. In the 1940s, Bannerman had criticised the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board's initial emphasis on providing power for electro-chemical and metallurgical industries.[88] In the late 1960s, Bannerman, now ennobled, voiced his objection to the Labour government's plan to assist private enterprise, in the shape of Alcan, in establishing an aluminium smelter at Invergordon in Easter Ross. He memorably asked, 'what will it profit the Highlands if it gain an Alcan heart and lose its own soul?' – a remark that is good shorthand for his ideas on the development of the Highlands in the late 1960s – and went on to argue that the region contained 'one million acres, undeveloped and bracken covered, which, after survey and reclamation, could be allocated to the production of folk and food and timber'.[89]

In a later debate on the reform of the crofting system – a very controversial issue in the late 1960s – he developed this theme, arguing that policies to 'increase the stability in crofting' would help to 'increase and develop the stability of indigenous working on the land, of the small man'.[90] This was a conventional line of argument, articulated by many advocates of the crofting system since its establishment by a Liberal government in 1886. The notion was that ensuring security of tenure for the crofter would encourage investment, and the croft could then become a base for other forms of employment, thereby retaining population in a region where conventional, full-time jobs were not especially plentiful. Similarly, Bannerman saw the development of forestry on land with less agricultural potential as another means of creating employment and thus preventing depopulation.

Bannerman was very much in the mainstream of the debate on the Highlands in the late 1960s. While the Labour government, with the establishment of its Highlands and Islands Development Board in 1965, clearly preferred economic development to land-tenure-based solutions to the region's problems, Labour presented this policy in a manner designed to capitalise on the emotional place that the Highlands occupied in Scotland's national identity. Attempting to stamp the authority of his party and government on the debate, Secretary of State Willie Ross declared that the 'Highlander was the man on Scotland's conscience'.[91] Bannerman's view of the HIDB was that it should be empowered to 'settle the people on the land and make agriculture and forestry the twin pillars of reconstruction in the Highlands'.[92] It is striking that in this area of policy – in contrast to much of his rhetoric on other subjects, such as housing, and Liberal ideology generally –

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[87] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser., vol.289, cols 1-2, 13 February 1968.
[88] John M. Bannerman, 'Post-war development of the Highlands and islands', *Proceedings of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow*, 69 (1944–5), 67–8.
[89] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 287, col. 706, 6 December 1967.
[90] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 295, col. 218, 16 July 1968; see also vol. 289, col. 1273, 5 March 1968 for a similar point.
[91] *House of Commons Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 708, col. 1095, 16 March 1965.
[92] *House of Lords Debates*, 5th ser., vol. 291, col. 1104, 1 May 1968.

Bannerman was content to see the state, in the shape of the HIDB, the Forestry Commission and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electricity Board, undertake the bulk of the work for the renovation of the Highlands.

Conclusion

Bannerman felt that in many ways he was not cut out for politics, possessing an insufficiently thick skin and strongly resenting personal attacks by unsubstantiated rumour which he felt were spread on occasion by his opponents, especially the Unionists in Inverness-shire during the campaigns of the 1950s.[93] This was a view echoed by Jo Grimond who wondered whether Bannerman was a 'natural politician'.[94]

When Bannerman entered politics in the 1930s, partisan politics were characterised by coalitions, splits and a degree of realignment. Within this fluid environment, Bannerman could move across the different nationalist factions without compromising his position in the independent Liberals. In the post-war period, the political environment hardened into something increasingly bipolar and became a context that was more difficult for those – like Bannerman and John MacCormick – who took a broader view, who sought to reach out beyond party lines and articulate a more 'personal' political message. It is, perhaps, no surprise that Bannerman had his best electoral performances in the Highlands in the 1950s, a political space in which partisanship had not yet become polarised.

Bannerman performed a very important political role for the Liberal party in Scotland. He was firmly committed to independent Liberalism, as opposed to the 'National' variant that moved towards the Unionists in the 1950s. He was one of a small group of committed activists who were prepared to work for the party at a time when it was at a low ebb. He was prepared to be a candidate, to identify himself as a Liberal without any hyphens or additional adjectives, and to articulate the ideas of the party at a time when it was short of coverage and publicity. When the Liberal Party began to recover in the 1960s, although Bannerman was not able to secure a seat in the House of Commons, the Scottish Highlands, where he had fought five campaigns, were an important site of revival. Inverness-shire, the seat that he had nursed through the 1950s, was the scene of a Liberal victory in 1964 – and the seat was held until 1997.

Central to Bannerman's Liberalism was his strong belief in Scottish Home Rule. In the 1950s, this issue did not have the prominence in Scottish political debate that it would later gain. This was a period in which unionism dominated Scottish politics, with the Labour Party articulating a very centrist position and deprecating any discussion of Scottish Home Rule. The Unionist Party, while they paid more attention to Scottish sensitivities in their rhetoric, adopted administrative, rather than parliamentary, devolution as a policy. In common with other Liberals like John MacCormick, Bannerman helped to keep Scottish Home Rule in the Liberal manifesto, thus ensuring that it remained part of Scottish political debate, even if only marginally so. As recent rhetoric shows, Bannerman is very much part of the political memory of Scottish devolution and Liberalism.

Author's Note

This article was developed from a paper given to one of the Bannerman Seminars at the University of Edinburgh. These seminars, and an annual lecture, are named after Dr John W. M. Bannerman, the son of the subject of this paper. Dr Bannerman was my colleague at the University of Edinburgh in the early part of my career. He was a distinguished historian of early medieval Scotland and had a keen interest in modern Scottish politics, all matters relating to the Gàidhealtachd, and sheep

[93] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 111.
[94] Fowler, *Bannerman*, 12.

farming – issues which I had the great pleasure of discussing with him on many occasions over morning coffee in 17 Buccleuch Place.[95]

I am grateful to Professor James Mitchell and Dr Malcolm Petrie for advice on an earlier draft of this paper. I have also benefited from the editorial input of Dr Virginia Blankenhorn and the comments of the anonymous reviewer.

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[95] Dauvit Broun and Martin MacGregor, 'Obituary: Dr John W. M. Bannerman, 1932–2008', *Scottish Historical Review* 88 (2009), 3–8.

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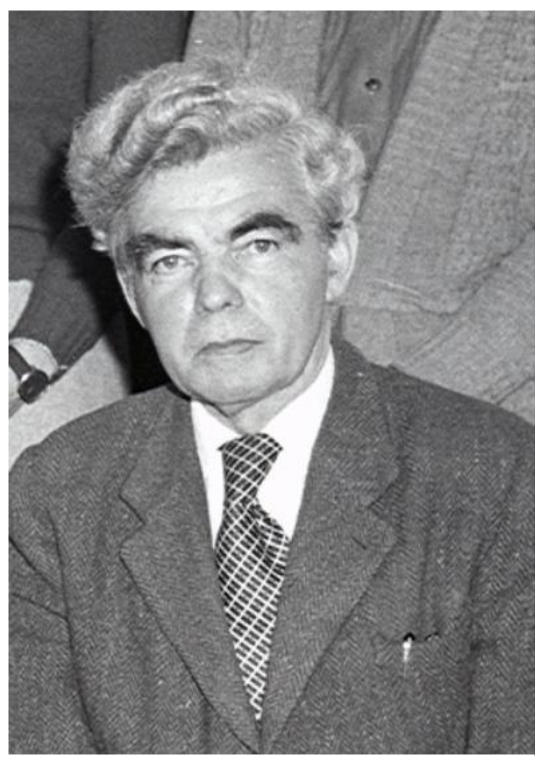
Iain Peatarsan (1916–1990), Neach-cruinneachaidh Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh

LIAM ALASTAIR CROUSE

Abstract

A native of the Isle of Berneray, Ian Paterson (1916-1990) was among Scotland's most prolific voluntary fieldworkers in the latter half of the 20th century, undertaking nearly two decades' worth of folklore collection amounting to several thousand recordings. In addition to important recording work for the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh, nearly half of his total output was gathered in his home community of Berneray in the Outer Hebrides.

Due to his skill, erudition, community connections, and enduring passion for the Gaelic oral tradition, Berneray enjoys one of the most complete folklore collections in the islands during this period, between 1960 and 1990. The article explores Ian Paterson's life, work, connections, interests, and methodology, making extensive use of his fieldwork recordings from the Isle of Berneray. It will show how he made use of his own family in his collection work and undertook repetitive fieldwork with the same informants to produce a valuable thick corpus from a single geographic community over a generation. It will also consider his legacy within the context of the School of Scottish Studies and shine a fresh light on a productive, if lesser known, folklore collector.



Iain Peatarsan, 1981. Le cead bho Sgoil Eolas na h-Alba.

Bheir an aiste seo sùil air an obair-chruinneachaidh a rinn Iain Peatarsan (1916–1990), Iain Fhionnlaigh, ann am Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh eadar 1965 agus 1982. Bha Iain Peatarsan am measg an luchd-cruinneachaidh a bu tharbhaiche a chuir ri Tasglann Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba, Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. A dh'aindeoin sin, 's e glè bheag de dh'obair sgoilearachd a rinn measadh air an dìleab aige gu ruige seo. 'S e amas na h-aiste seo bun-stèidh a thairgsinn mu shaothair Iain Fhionnlaigh ann am Beàrnaraigh.

Bu Bheàrndrach gu chùl e agus bha an dualchas, an t-eòlas, agus an càirdeas ud aig cridhe na h-obrach-cruinneachaidh aige ann an eilean a dhùthchais. Nì an aiste seo geàrr-chunntas air sinnsearachd nam Peatarsanach anns an eilean, gus Iain a shuidheachadh ann an co-theacsa a chàirdean agus a choimhearsnachd fhèin. Ann am mìneachadh eachdraidh a bheatha fhèin, bithear a' leudachadh air na tùsan foillsichte mu bheatha le bhith a' toirt sùil air cuid de na sgrìobhaidhean aige fhèin. Cuiridh seo ris an eòlas a th' againn air an ùine mus deach fhastadh aig Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann ann an 1966.

Ged a b' ann bho obair thar-sgrìobhaidh a rinn e a chosnadh, dh'fhalbhadh Iain Fhionnlaigh air iomadh saor-latha clàraidh, mar a ghabhte orra, air ais a Bheàrnaraigh thar faisg air fichead bliadhna, a' càrnadh ultach mòr de chlàraidhean. Thèid coimhead ris na modhan-obrach a bh' aige an cois

cruinneachadh beul-aithris agus breithnichear air mar a bha comhairle sgoilearan na Sgoil' Eòlais leithid Dhòmhnaill Eairdsidh Dhòmhnallaich a' toirt buaidh air. Coimheadar air cuid de na dàimhean a bh' ann eadar e fhèin agus a chuid fhiosraichean, a' bhana-sheanchaidh agus a' bhana-bhàrd Ceit Dix (1890–1981) nam measg. Chithear mar a dh'fhàs dlùth-chàirdeas eadar Iain agus Ceit agus mar a chaidh sin a riochdachadh ann am bàrdachd agus rannan aotrom, a' toirt sealladh àraid air an dàimh eadar neach-clàraidh agus fiosraiche air taobh a-staigh an dualchais. Bheirear sùil cuideachd air an àite a bh' aig peathraichean Iain, Beasag agus Catrìona, anns an obair-chruinneachaidh agus mar a bha iad ga chuideachadh mar luchd-cruinneachaidh sealadach.

Eachdraidh nam Peatarsanach

Bha tomhais de dh'inbhe aig na Peatarsanaich, an sliochd dham buineadh Iain, ann an Eilean Bheàrnaraigh. Bha e ri ràdh gun tàinig a' chiad Pheatarsanach, fear dom b' ainm Tormod mac Shomhairle, às an Eilean Dubh mar fhear-teagasg do chloinn Shir Thormoid MhicLeòid Bheàrnaraigh (1614–1705) às dèidh Bhlàr Worcester ann an 1651.[1] Bha foghlam mar sin anns an fhuil aca, agus bha càirdeas aig an teaghlach ri Iain Moireastan, Gobha na Hearadh (1796–1852).

Dh'fhulaing na Peatarsanaich, coltach ris na h-uimhir eile, ri linn suidheachadh agus ath-shuidheachadh nan tuathanasan Beàrndrach tro mheadhan an 19mh linn. Chaidh sìn-s[h]eanair Iain, Iain Peatarsan (1786–1866), a chur far an fhearainn ann an Ruisigearraidh ann an 1854 agus chaidh a shuidheachadh mar choitear anns a' Bhaile, far an do ghabh e ri obair an aisig ann an Caolas na Hearadh anns a' pheàirdse aige, *An Curaidh*. Bha peàirdseachan nam bàtaichean-sheòl leathann, gun druim domhainn annta, air an togail anns an eilean airson luchdan carago a ghiùlan eadar na h-eileanan. Am measg a' charago a dh'aisigeadh e, bha uisge-beatha Pabach, agus b' ann eadar Iain agus muinntir Phabaigh a bha an còrdadh gun leagtadh seòl a' pheàirdse nuair a bha gàidsear air bòrd a' tighinn air tòir briuthas ainmeil an eilein – eachdraidh a chluinnear fhathast ann am beul-aithris an latha an-diugh.[2] Tha aithne air Bàgh na Curaidh agus Port Curaidh Mhic Shomhairle, far an robh am bàta-aisig ga chumail air acair.[3]

Phòs Iain Peatarsan (1786–1866) dà thuras. B' e Seònaid Ros (1790–1838) a' chiad bhean aige agus bha ceathrar chloinne aca. Bha an dithist ghillean, Gilleasbuig agus Tormod, aithnichte mar mharaichean. B' e Gilleasbuig Peatarsan (1821–1895), am mac a bu shine aig Iain agus Seònaid, a bha na chaiptean air an iacht-seòlaidh *Golden Eagle*, aon 150 troigh a dh'fhaid agus 445 tunna, am bàta aig Sir Eideard Scott, bancair, uachdaran Oighreachd Ceann a Tuath na Hearadh, agus fear-iacht ainmeil. Eadar-dhà-sgeul, bha an iacht *Golden Eagle* na cuspair rannan ann am Beàrnaraigh agus tha co-dhiù òran agus rann againn a rinn am bàrd Calum MacAsgaill (1825–1903), Calum mac Iain 'ic Phàdruig aig an robh càirdeas ris na Peatarsanaich, [4] agus pìos bàrdachd eile às na Hearadh.[5]

An dèidh bàs Seònaid, phòs Iain Màiri NicPhàic (1800–1848); bha triùir chloinne aca. Chaochail Màiri nuair a bha a' chlann fhathast beag agus thogadh a' chlann le piuthar am màthar, Anna NicPhàic (1797–1878) agus an duine aice, Dòmhnall MacFhionghain (1805–1886), aig nach robh clann. Ri ùine, bheireadh gach aonan den triùir chloinne Canada orra, le taic bhon Bhaintighearna Dunmore a bha a' brosnachadh eilthireachd.

[1] Iain Peatarson, 'Peatarsonaich Bhearnaraidh', *An Gàidheal* lii (Dàmhair, 1957): 98. Alick Morrison, 'The Grianam case, 1734–1781, the kelp industry, and the Clearances in Harris, 1811–1854', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, lii (1980–82): 85.

[2] Alick Morrison, 'The Grianam case', 85.

[3] Donald MacKillop, 'The place names of Berneray: A manuscript by Mr John Ferguson, Berneray', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, liii (1982–84): 135.

[4] Angus MacLeod (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1968.181.A14 agus SA1970.292.B8, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/130024 agus www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/35029. Duncan MacLeod (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1971.274.B7, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/48795.

[5] Angus MacLeod (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1970.292.B9, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/35059.

Bha Aonghas Peatarsan (1844–1925), am pàiste a b' òige aig Iain agus Màiri – seanair Iain Peatarsan am fear-cruinneachaidh – na dhuine cliobhar dìcheallach.[6] Dh'ionnsaich Aonghas ceàrd na saoirsneachd ann an sgoil-oidhche thall ann an Canada mus do thill e a Bheàrnaraigh air làithean-saora ann an 1870. Dh'fhuirich e a-bhos air sgàth na tè a phòsadh e, Catrìona NicCumhais (1846–1925). Bha an dithist a' fuireach còmhla ri piuthar màthair Aonghais, Anna agus Dòmhnall MacFhionghain, ann an Rubha na Geodha Duibhe (8 Rubha Mòr), [7] far an robh Aonghas ris a' mharsantachd, a' reic a' chlò a dhèanadh a bhean, cuide ri biadh agus bathar bhon bhùth a bha an cois an taighe.

Bha deichnear chloinne aig Aonghas agus Catrìona, agus iad uile a' fuireach fo chabar an t-seana taigh-tughaidh air an rubha. Den chloinn aig Aonghas agus Catrìona, bha Aonghas 'Beag' Peatarsan (1874–1930), am mac a bu shine, na ghrèidhear; Fionnlagh Peatarsan (1876–1953), an dàrna mac a bu shine agus athair Iain againne (faic gu h-ìseal); agus Tormod Peatarsan (1889-1967), na mharsanta, aig an robh a' chiad chàr agus a' chiad tractar anns an eilean. Bha Màiri Anna Pheatarsan (1879–1955) pòsta aig Ruairidh Peatarsan (1867–1944), oifigear na cusbainn air feadh na Gàidhealtachd.[8]

Nuair a dh'fhosgladh Borgh ann an 1900, an dèidh aimhreit an fhearainn, [9] fhuair Aonghas Peatarsan dà chroit, 20/21 Borgh, ann an Rubha an Aoil. B' e a b' adhbhar gun d' fhuair e na dhà seach an t-aon, mar a fhuair càch, gun robh e a' comhairleachadh a' mhaoir, Thomas Wilson, a bha a' roinn a-mach an fhearainn, a thaobh cò a b' fheàrr a chumadh suas na croitean.[10] Dh'aontaich an dithist gun rachadh Aonghas an urras air na Borghaich eile, a dhèanamh cinnteach nach biodh iad deireannach a' pàigheadh am màil.[11] Ghluais teaghlach Aonghais gu Rubha an Aoil ann am Borgh, a' fàgail an taighe agus na bùtha aig Rubha na Geodha Duibhe aig Fionnlagh.

Tha cunntas prìseil againn air an t-seòrsa taigh a bha aig na Peatarsanaich ann an Rubha an Aoil anns an fhèin-eachdraidh a sgrìobh Aonghas Caimbeul, Am Puilean. Bha e a' loidseadh còmhla ris na Peatarsanaich anns na bliadhnaichean an dèidh a' Chogaidh Mhòir.

Chaith mi an geamhradh agus greis de'n earrach mu dheireadh am Beàrnaraidh air mhuinntireas aig teaghlach Aonghais Paterson, Rubha an Aoil. Cha robh leth-brath, tàir no eadar-sgaradh air bith — a bha cho bitheanta eadar maighstir is seirbheiseach aig an àm ud air a chleachdadh san teaghlach seo. Bha mi mar aon dhiu fhéin. Bha iad na bu shaoibhir na an cumantas, le bùth agus stoc mhór ainmhidhean. 'Se daoine suilbhir, ceanail agus conaltrach a bha annta, agus b'ainneamh uair nach biodh fealla-dhà is lethbhreith éibhinn 'ga dhèanamh air cuideigin 'nar measg fhéin. Bha fear de na mic, Aonghas, a bha cho cuilbheartach gu ball-magaidh a dhèanamh dhinn agus gum feumainn fhéin agus an t-searbhant nighinn a bhi air dheagh fhaire uaithe. Bha an dachaidh 'na thaigh-céilidh agus bu mhór na cinn-còmhraidh agus connspaid ris na dh'éisd mi ann.[12]

Rinneadh dealbh de dh'fhàrdaich bhlàth fhuranaich anns an robh fearas-chuideachd agus deagh-ghean. Ge mhòr an cuid maoin, tha e coltach nach robh iad gan cumail fhèin air leth bho shluagh an eilein agus gun robh e na chleachdadh aig daoine tadhal a-steach air chèilidh, 's dòcha air an rathad dhan bhùthaidh. Dh'fhàg siud gun robh taigh nam Peatarsanach na mheadhan air beatha na coimhearsnachd Bheàrndrach.

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[6] Bessie Paterson, Catriona Paterson, Morag MacLean (fiosraichean), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1973.123.A15 & B1, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/46678.

[7] Bill Lawson, *Croft History: Isle of Berneray, Volume 2* (Northton, Harris: Bill Lawson Publications, 2005), 146.

[8] Alick Morrison, deas., *Òrain Chaluim: Being the Poems of Malcolm Macaskill, Bard of Berneray, Harris* (Glasgow: Alexander Maclaren and Sons, 1960), 22.

[9] Airson geàrr-chunntas mun aimhreit, faic Morrison, *Òrain Chaluim*, 12–13.

[10] Christina Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1968.178.A7-A9, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/50054.

[11] Bessie Paterson, Catriona Paterson, Morag MacLean (fiosraichean), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1973.123.B10, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/44906.

[12] Aonghas Caimbeul, *A' Suathadh ri Iomadh Rubha: Eachraidh a Bheatha* (Glaschu: Gairm, 1973), 160.

Bha inbhe agus cliù aig an teaghlach, agus chaidh sin a leasachadh leis an ath ghinealach. Chothlamaich Fionnlagh, athair Iain, an dà dhreuchd a bh' aig 'athair agus a sheanair, a' mharsantachd agus an obair-aiseig. Bha taigh agus bùth anns a' Gheodha Dhubh, agus gheibheadh daoine an t-aiseag an sin cho math. A thuilleadh air na h-obraichean sin bha e cuideachd na mhaor-sìthe (JP) agus na chlàradair ann am Beàrnaraigh eadar 1903 agus 1952.[13]

B' e duine adhartach a bh' ann am Fionnlagh ann an linn far an robh teicneòlas a' sìor-leasachadh. Thug Fionnlagh na chiad einnseanan-mara dhan eilean. Ann an 1921 cheannaich e am bàta *Kelvin* às a' Chaol Aillseach, a' chiad bhàta anns an robh motar ann an uisgeachan an eilein, airson a chleachdadh mar bhàta-aiseig. Abair annas a bha sa bhàta nuair a nochd i ris an t-sluagh fo cumhachd fhèin, gun seòl no crann, gun fhios aig daoine mar a bha einnseanan-mara ag obrachadh.[14] Chaidh òran a dhèanamh leis a' bhàrd Bheàrndrach Eachann MacFhionghain (1886–1954) a' moladh cho goireasach agus a bha am bàta nach gèilleadh ri droch shìde.[15] Chan e a-mhàin gum bu leis na chiad dhà bhàta motaraichte, *Kelvin* agus *Cabar Feidh*, ach gun robh e a' toirt einnseanan-mara eile a-steach a reic ri iasgairean Bheàrnaraigh gus an cabhlach iasgaich a mhotarachadh tro na 1920an.[16] Bha e na àidseant-ionaid aig a' chompanaidh Bergius ann an Glaschu a bha a' togail nan einnseanan Kelvin, rud a bha a' ciallachadh gun robh e an urra ri ceannachd, ri reic, agus ri càradh nan einnseanan ann am Beàrnaraigh aig àm nuair nach robh na h-iasgairean eòlach air a' ghnothach.[17] Dòrlach bhliadhnaichean an dèidh dhan *Kelvin* thighinn, cheannaich Fionnlagh càr trì-cuibhleach Morgan ann an 1928 airson a chleachdadh ann an lìbhrigeadh min-fhlùir agus gràn timcheall an eilein.[18] Chithear an càr sin ga thasgadh ann am Museum nan Eilean ann an Steòrnabhagh, air iasad bho Thaigh-tasgaidh Nàiseanta na h-Alba.

Phòs Fionnlagh Catrìona NicCumhais (1884–1968), nighean coitear-iasgair an Cùl na Beinne, ann an 1907. Bha sianar chloinne aig Fionnlagh agus Catrìona: Christina (1908–1999), Seonaidh Angus (1909–1968), Beasag (1912–1994), Iain (1916–1990), Catrìona (1919–1984), agus Ruairidh (1922–1983). Leanadh a' chlann ri obair athar. Ghabh Christina, an nighean bu shine, dreuchd Fhionnlaigh mar chlàradair os làimhe ann an 1952, gus an deach uallach na h-obrach-clàraidh a stèidheachadh a Loch nam Madadh ann an 1965. Fhuair Seonaidh Angus, am mac a bu shine, bàta-aiseig athar agus bha corra bàta eile aige tro na bliadhnaichean, mar an *Dunbeath Castle*. Bha e cuideachd aithnichte mar phaidhleat geòla na iacht rìoghail *Britannia* ann an 1960, euchd a chaidh a mholadh ann an òran le Ceit Dix.[19] Bha Beasag na banaltram 's na neach-bùtha, agus bha i ag obair ann an taigh nam fònaichean; chaidh duais BEM a bhuileachadh oirre ann an 1970 air shàilleabh obair nam fònaichean.[20]

Tha an eachdraidh seo na dearbhadh air inbhe an teaghlaich anns an eilean aig toiseach an 20mh linn agus tha i a' toirt dealbh dhuinn air an t-saoghal anns an do rugadh agus thogadh Iain Fhionnlaigh.

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[13] 'Finlay Paterson', Hebridean Connections, https://hebrideanconnections.com/record/people/76997/.

[14] Christina Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1968.178.B8, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba. www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/50062.

[15] Eachann MacFhionghain, *Òrain Eachainn MhicFhionghain – Bàrd Bheàrnaraigh* (Steòrnabhagh: Acair, 2013), 73; Margaret MacLeod (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1968.188.A2, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba. www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/48143; Duncan MacKinnon (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1968.182, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/130055.

[16] Flora MacCuish (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1969.135.B7, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/53085.

[17] Angus MacKillop (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1970.294.B10, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/60236.

[18] Comunn Eachdraidh Bheàrnaraigh, *Beàrnaraigh tro na Linntean* (Beàrnaraigh: Comunn Eachdraidh Bheàrnaraigh, 2015), 11.

[19] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1968.183.A9, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/44772; Alison Dix, deas., *Ceit an Tàilleir à Beàrnaraigh: Eachdraidh Beatha agus Taghadh de Stòiridhean is Rannan* (Inbhir Nis: CLÀR, 2019), 38–9.

[20] 'Beasag Paterson', Tobar an Dualchais, https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/person/5790.

Bu dual dhaibh foghlam agus bha iad dìcheallach a bhith a' leasachadh a' chrannchuir aca fhèin. Bu mhòr cliù nam Peatarsanach anns an eilean far an robh iad an urra ri iomadh gnothach eadar a' mharsantachd, còmhdhail, agus rianadh gnothaichean na coimhearsnachd. Bha iad air am meas le maor an eilein mar theaghlach earbsach stèidheil aig an robh tuigse air ionmhas agus fiach sa choimhearsnachd. Bha iad air thoiseach air leasachaidhean teicneòlais san eilean, gach cuid air muir agus air tìr. Mar sin dheth, faodaidh sinn beachdachadh air na Peatarsanaich mar theaghlach a bha mar gum biodh suidhichte air stairsnich an eilein, a' gabhail ealla air na thigeadh dhan choimhearsnachd, agus air na dh'fhalbhadh aiste.

Tha an suidheachadh teaghlaich dha-rìreabh cudromach ann an tuigsinn saoghal Iain Pheatarsain leis cho bunaiteach agus a bha iad anns an obair aige agus mar a bhiodh e a' cur na lìonra càirdeil gu feum, mar a chnuasaichear nas fhaide air adhart. Tha e cuideachd a' toirt dhuinn uinneag air mar a bha a' choimhearsnachd fhèin a' faicinn Iain Pheatarsain, am Beàrndrach agus an neach-cruinneachaidh, nuair a thigeadh e thuca a dh'iarraidh seanchas no òran. B' fhìor a ràdh gum biodh na feartan teaghlaich na bu bhrìghmhor airson neach-cruinneachaidh dhe leithid a bha ri obair-chlàraidh anns a' choimhearsnachd dhùthchasaich aige fhèin. Agus, 's dòcha nas cudromaiche buileach, breithnichear nas fhaide air adhart mar a b' iad, an teaghlach aige fhèin, am measg a' phrìomh luchd-fiosrachaidh agus luchd-cuideachaidh aige. On a tha mi air tuairisgeul a thoirt air na daoine on tàinig e, bheirear sùil a-nis air eachdraidh-bheatha Iain Fhionnlaigh fhèin a dh'fhaicinn mar a fhuair e an dà chuid ùghdarras agus eòlas anns na cuspairean a chruinnicheadh e.

Eachdraidh-beatha

Rugadh Iain Peatarsan, Iain Fhionnlaigh Aonghais 'ic Iain 'ic Shomhairle 'ic Thormoid 'ic Shomhairle 'ic Alasdair 'ic Thormoid, ann am Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh air 16 Faoilleach 1916, an teis-meadhan a' Chogaidh Mhòir.[21]

Fhuair Iain deagh sgoil, a' tòiseachadh ann am Bun-sgoil Bheàrnaraigh ann an 1921 agus an uair sin ann an Acadamaidh Rìoghail Inbhir Nis.[22] Cheumnaich e o Oilthigh Ghlaschu agus Colaiste Cnoc Iòrdain far an robh e a' trèanadh gu bhith na thidsear.

Air taobh a-muigh obair na sgoile, bha ùidh mhòr aig Iain ann an dualchas nan Gàidheal agus ann an sgrìobhadh bho aois òig. Tha e coltach gum b' e 'Ciad Shealg Ruairidh' a' chiad phìos bàrdachd a rinn e, uaireigin anns na bliadhnaichean ron Dàrna Chogadh.[23] Tha an t-òran a' moladh ciad turas-seilge a bhràthar Ruairidh an tòir air sgairbh. Anns a' phìos, tha e a' toirt dealbh air clann òg a' falbh timcheall nan eileanan agus na sgeirean beaga a ghlacadh biadh airson lòn dhan teaghlach. Tha am pìos cuideachd a' toirt dhuinn sealladh air pearsantachd Iain aig aois òig, agus e gu gràdhach a' brosnachadh agus a' misneachadh a' bhràthar òig ann an coileanadh ciad euchdan na fearalachd le bhith ga mholadh ann an dàn dham bu shamhail òran-molaidh ceann-cinnidh.

Thòisich an Dàrna Cogadh goirid an dèidh dha Iain ceumnachadh on cholaiste agus bha e anns a' Chabhlach Rìoghail eadar 1940 agus 1946.[24] Bha e air bòrd na luing-chogaidh HMS *Prince of Wales* a dh'fhalbh gu cobhair Singapore nuair a chaidh a chur fodha ann an ionnsaigh le feachdan Ìmpireachd Iapàin, dà latha an dèidh forbhas Pearl Harbour. Bha Iain greis san uisge ach mar a rinn an t-Àgh fhuair e a theasraiginn le bàta Breatannach. Thill e gu cogadh na h-Eòrpa agus bha e an làthair nuair a thàinig Feachdan nan Caidreabhach air tìr ann an Salerno agus Anzio san Eadailt.

Rinn e am pìos bàrdachd 'An Tighinn Dhachaigh' nuair a leigeadh ma sgaoil às an nèibhidh e ann an 1946.[25] Bha e a' cuimhneachadh orra nach do thàrr às a' chogadh agus nach d' fhuair cothrom a bhith cruinn còmhla rin teaghlaichean tuilleadh, mar a shealbhaich dhàsan. Tha e coltach nach

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[21] Ronald Black, deas., *An Tuil* (Dùn Èideann: Polygon, 2002), 777.

[22] 'Ian Paterson', Hebridean Connections, https://hebrideanconnections.com/record/people/105734/.

[23] Ian Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1969.198, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/103927.

[24] Black, *An Tuil*, 777.

[25] Paterson, SA1969.198.

bruidhneadh e mòran mu na dh'fhiosraich e anns a' chogadh agus, mar sin, 's dòcha gum biodh e fìor a ràdh gun robh nàdar de chiont air gun do mhair esan beò, no gun do sheachain e campaichean nan Iapànach an dèidh creachadh Singapore, eu-coltach ri mòran de 'chompanaich eile.

An dèidh a' chogaidh, thòisich e air a dhreuchd mar thidsear bun-sgoil ann am Fìobha, agus bha e ri teagasg eadar 1947 agus 1966, 's e mu dheireadh na mhaighstir-sgoile ann an Coaltown of Balgonie, Fìobha.[26] Chan eil iongnadh gun toireadh eòlas mar mhaighstir-sgoile dha ùghdarras, ceannas, agus giùlan a bhiodh nam buannachd mar neach-clàraidh.

Leudaich 'ùidh ann an litreachas nan Gàidheal, an dà chuid sgrìobhte agus beul-aithriseach, bho na 1950an a-mach. B' e a' chiad fhoillseachadh aige breacadh Beàrndrach den sgeulachd thradaiseanta 'Gìgean agus Guaigean', a chuir e dhan *Ghàidheal*, iris mhìosail a' Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich, ann an 1952. B' ann aig bana-Pheatarsanach a fhuair e am breacadh, Ceit nighean Thormoid Òig (1857–1941),[27] a bha sna h-oghaichean le a sheanar. Leis gun robh Ceit Pheatarsan air siubhal còrr is deich bliadhna ron fhoillseachadh, chan eil e soilleir an robh làmh-sgrìobhainn aig Iain air neo, nas coltaiche, gun robh an sgeulachd air chuimhne aige an dèidh dha a cluinntinn na chnapach. A thuilleadh air an sgeulachd fhèin, thug Iain mìneachadh air a' chàirdeas a bh' eadar e fhèin agus Ceit, cuide ri tuairisgeul ghoirid air sinnsearachd nam Peatarsanach ann am Beàrnaraigh. Tha e follaiseach, mar sin, gun robh ùidh aig Iain ann an cruinneachadh seanchais fada mun do thòisich e aig an Sgoil Eòlais agus gun robh nàdar de thuigse aige air modhan-obrach cruinneachadh na beul-aithris aig an àm, far an robh an tùs a cheart cho cudromach ris an teacsa. Chithear cuideachd bunaitean a' mhodh-obrach aige fhèin ga chur sìos san dòigh san robh fiosraichean boireann ris an robh e càirdeach fo ùidh aige. Bha cuideachd an t-eòlas a thog e na òige ga fhàgail comasach air measaidhean breithneachail a dhèanamh air seanchas nan Gàidheal.

Thòisich e mun àm seo a bhith a' toirt a chuid sgrìobhaidh fhèin gu aire luchd-èisteachd na b' fharsaing. Chaidh an iris litreachail *Gairm* a chur air bhonn ann an 1952, agus eadar 1953 agus 1961, dh'fhoillsich i dusan pìos. Nam measg bha bàrdachd, dà sgeulachd ghoirid, gnàthasan-cainnt Beàrndrach, agus measadh aithghearr air dualchainnt ann an sgeulachd Bheàrndrach a nochd ann am *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, 'Cailleach na Ribeig'.[28] B' e bàrdachd a bu mhotha a bha e ris agus a thuilleadh air an iris, bhiodh e a' cur phìosan gu farpaisean bàrdachd a' Chomuinn Ghàidhealaich. Mar eisimpleir, choisinn 'Taisdeal an Tìr na h-Aigne' an dàrna duais aig Mòd Baile Pheairt ann an 1954.[29]

Tha an sgrìobhadh a' toirt cunntas air 'ùidh ann am beul-aithris nan Gàidheal, agus 's dòcha fiù 's gun robh e a' falbh timcheall Bheàrnaraigh a chruinneachadh mus do thòisich e aig Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba ann an 1966. Tha an sgeulachd ghoirid *Inneal a' Mhì-sheilbh*,[30] a nochd ann an *Gairm* ann an 1957, mu dheidhinn turas-clàraidh (mas fhìor?) gu sgeulaiche a chruinneachadh seann bheul-aithris. Tha annas na sgeòil an crochadh air iomagain an sgeulaiche ron fòn – inneal a' mhì-sheilbh a bha air ùr-thighinn dhan taigh – on a thachair rosad ana-ghnàthaiche taibhsearachd leis an fhòn na bu thràithe. Ged a dh'fhaodadh gur e obair ficsein tha san sgeulachd air fad, tha i a' dearbhadh gun robh cruinneachadh beul-aithris air aire Iain Fhionnlaigh grunn bhliadhnaichean mus robh e ris an leithid an lùib na Sgoil' Eòlais (faic gu h-ìseal). Tha e cuideachd a' toirt beachd air tighinn an teicneòlais ùir seo dha na h-eileanan agus mar a dh'fhaodadh 'ràn oillteil an fhón' bristeadh a-steach air innse seanchais – rud a thachradh tric gu leòr do dh'Iain tro na bliadhnaichean!

Bha Iain Fhionnlaigh ag obair do Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba eadar 1966 agus 1984, ùine air an toir mi sùil gu h-ìseal. Bha e am measg an luchd-cruinneachaidh a bu tharbhaiche aig an Sgoil, a' fàgail

[26] Black, *An Tuil*, 777.

[27] 'Catherine Paterson', Hebridean Connections, https://hebrideanconnections.com/record/people/74198/.

[28] Dr Tòmas MacAilpein agus Prof. Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, *Gairm: Ùghdar is Dealbh, Rosg is Rann 1952–2002* (Glaschu: DASG, 2021), 658–9.

[29] Ian Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1969.198, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/103926.

[30] Iain Peatarsan, 'Inneal a' Mhì-Sheilbh', *Gairm* 19 (Earrach, 1957): 213–17.

a làraich fhèin air dìleab na Sgoile. Leigeadh e seachad an obair-chlàraidh ann an 1982, mus do leig e dheth a dhreuchd mar òraidiche aig an Sgoil Eòlais ann an 1984, an dearbh bhliadhna san do chaochail a phiuthar ghràdhach Catrìona. Bhàsaich Iain na bhanntrach ann an 1990 agus chaidh a thìodhlacadh ann am Beàrnaraigh.

Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba

Stèidhicheadh Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba ann an 1951 ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann airson cruinneachadh, glèidheadh, agus cur air adhart dualchas agus beul-aithris na h-Alba ann an suidheachadh oilthigheach.[31] Aig an dearbh àm agus a bha ùidh Iain Fhionnlaigh ann am beul-aithris nan Gàidheal ga daingneachadh, bha luchd-obrach na Sgoil' Eòlais nan drip a' trusadh seanchas agus eachdraidh-bheòil air feadh na h-Alba an cois sluagh dùthchasach a bha an imis a dhol à bith.[32] Air a' chiad ghreis, b' e cruinneachadh seach mìneachadh a bha fa-near do luchd-obrach na Sgoile.[33] B' e a' bhuil a bh' ann, an dèidh nan chiad deich bliadhna no mar sin, gun robh na teipichean-raoin – a bha a-nis air an glèidheadh – a' sìor-chàrnadh anns an tasglann ùr ann an Taigh Minto agus Ceàrnag Sheòrais na dhèidh, agus gun robh feum air tar-sgrìobhaichean.[34] B' iad oileanaich a bha an urra ris an obair an toiseach gus an deach tar-sgrìobhaichean fhastadh. Thòisich Mòrag NicLeòid ris an obair ann an 1962, a' tilleadh an dèidh greis foghlaim ann an 1964 mar thar-sgrìobhaiche ciùil.[35]

Dh'fhàg Iain Peatarsan a dhreuchd teagaisg ann an 1966, aig aois 50, agus ghabh e os làimh obair a' tar-sgrìobhadh theipeachan Gàidhlig ann an Tasglann na Sgoil' Eòlais. Carson a dh'fhàg e dreuchd inbheach a' mhaighstir-sgoile 's gun e ach òg? Bha e fìor gun leigeadh an obair ùr leis na sgilean, eòlas, agus dealas aige mu dhualchas na Gàidhlig a chur gu feum na dhreuchd. Fhreagradh obair na tasglainn air cuideachd, chan e a-mhàin air sàilleabh a chuid chomasan, ach cuideachd a thaobh a nàdair. Ged a bha e dòigheil, bha e diùid.[36]

Ged a tha an aiste seo a-mach air obair-chlàraidh Iain ann am Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh, feumar cuimhneachadh nach b' e siud a' phrìomh obair aige. Rinn e iomadh tar-sgrìobhadh feumail, cuid dhiubh a nochdadh ri ùine anns an *Tocher*, iris na Sgoil' Eòlais, bho 1971 air adhart. Thug an Dr Iain MacAonghuis tuairisgeul air nàdar na h-obrach tar-sgrìobhaidh:

> Once collected, the material had to be transcribed, and music and text transcribers were appointed. Transcription of tapes was actually begun at a very early stage, by students employed during vacation, before the School moved from Minto House in Chambers Street to George Square. Field recordings were often made under difficult conditions, and extraneous noises on the tape can present a formidable challenge to the transcriber, particularly when the recording machines used were very much less sophisticated than present-day equipment. Even today, textual transcription can be very exacting, and all transcripts require to be checked with care. That said, the many volumes of transcripts, a labour of years, are a most helpful guide to the contents of the tape record.[37]

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[31] Margaret MacKay, 'The First Sixty Years of the School of Scottish Studies: An Overview', ann an *The Carrying Stream Flows On: Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the School of Scottish Studies*, deas. Bob Chambers (Cearsiadar, Eilean Leòdhais: Islands Book Trust, 2013), 1–33.

[32] John MacInnes, 'Reminiscences of the School of Scottish Studies of the University of Edinburgh', ann an *'A Guid Hairst': Collecting and Archiving Scottish Tradition,* deas. Katherine Campbell, William Lamb, Neill Martin agus Gary West (Maastricht: Shaker Verlag, 2013), 232.

[33] Ruairidh MacThòmais, 'Co-Chruinneachadh Luchd Bial-Aithris an Steornabhagh', *Gairm* 6 (Geamhradh, 1953): 158.

[34] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 233.

[35] Mòrag MacLeod, 'Tocher at 50: Morag MacLeod and Tocher', The School of Scottish Studies Archives and Library (blog), https://libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/sssa/tocher-50-morag/.

[36] Black, *An Tuil*, 777.

[37] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 233–4.

Thòisich Iain na thar-sgrìobhaiche aig àm nuair a bha an Sgoil ag atharrachadh. Ged a chaidh a stèidheachadh an toiseach mar roinn rannsachaidh a chruinnicheadh agus a sgrùdadh beul-aithris air a toirt às obair-raoin, bha dleastanasan ùra an teagaisg air thighinn agus an Sgoil Eòlais air a dhol fo sgèith Roinn nan Ealain. Ged a bha obair-chlàraidh fhathast a' tachairt, b' ann aig ìre na bu thana a bha i.[38]

Bha e na chleachdadh aig Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba a bhith a' brosnachadh luchd-obrach, a bh' air am fastadh mar thar-sgrìobhaichean no rianadairean, gu bhith ri clàradh na beul-aithrise iad fhèin.[39] 'S fhiach cuimhneachadh ge-tà gur ann mar shaor-thoilich a bha an obair seo air a gabhail os làimh leis an luchd-obrach neo-acadamaigeach.[40] Bha strì fhada air a bhith ann eadar an t-Oilthigh agus an Sgoil mun fheum a bh' ann an obair-raoin dha leithid, gu h-àraidh nuair nach robh an stuth cruinnichte gu feum dìreach ann an obair sgoileireachd. Tha e coltach nach robh an t-Oilthigh air an aon ràmh mun luach a bh' anns an dualchas-beòil gun adhbhar acadaimigeach.

A dh'aindeoin na leisge oifigeil sin, bha *esprit de corps* dha-rìreabh an cois na Sgoile agus còrr den dàrna chuid den luchd-obrach an sàs ann an obair-chruinneachaidh, mar phàirt den obair, no gu saor-thoileach.[41] Bha leithid Dhòmhnaill Eairdsidh Dhòmhnallaich, Alan Bruford, an Dr Iain MacAonghuis, agus Eric Cregeen ag obair gu dìcheallach air feadh na Gàidhealtachd a rèir an cuid ùidhean fhèin. Thug Iain MacAonghuis tuairisgeul air obair na Sgoile aig an àm seo, agus mar a ghabhadh an luchd-obrach ris an obair-chruinneachaidh gu sgaoilteach saor:

> …there was never any systematic plan for collection, and as a result the Archive, like Topsy, 'just grow'd'. Nor were collectors expected to undergo a period of training; rather, it was presumed that those who took up the work knew how to carry it out. Collection was an individual pursuit, and each collector had his or her own agenda and priorities. Two or three colleagues might occasionally travel together, sometimes accompanied by a technician, and then on the whole work separately. Collectors chose where to go and whom to interview according to personal knowledge and predilection.[42]

A dh'aindeoin 's gun do chùm Iain MacAonghuis a-mach nach robh an luchd-obrach air an trèanadh gu foirmeil anns an obair agus na modhan-obrach na cois, chomharraich e mar a bha ro-dhùil gum biodh an luchd-obrach eòlach mun obair. Bhiodh siud fìor gu leòr mu Iain, a fhuair togail ann an coimhearsnachd Ghàidhealach agus a theann ri beagan obair-chruinneachaidh roimhe. Ach bhiodh e na iongnadh mura robh ionnsachadh a' dol anns a' chùl air na dòighean a b' fheàrr gus an obair-chlàraidh a chur air adhart, gus an seanchaidh a riarachadh, gu dè na ceistean a b' fheàrr rim faighneachd, agus mar sin air adhart.

Bha stiùiridhean ri làimhe aig an Sgoil dha luchd-cruinneachaidh pàirt-ùine agus sealadach anns na 1950an.[43] Cuideachd, bha e car stèidhichte aig luchd-obrach na Sgoile a bhith a' tòiseachadh le obair-chlàraidh am measg chàirdean agus eòlaich an neach-cruinneachaidh. B' e sin a rinn Calum Iain MacGillEathain ann an Ratharsair ann an 1945[44] agus an Dr Iain MacAonghuis anns an Eilean Sgitheanach ann an 1953.[45] Mar sin, cha bhiodh e na annas gum biodh Iain Fhionnlaigh a' tòiseachadh ann am Beàrnaraigh.

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[38] John McQueen, 'The Work of the School of Scottish Studies', *Oral History*, 2/1 (1974): 62–3.
[39] MacKay, 'The First Sixty Years', 21.
[40] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 238.
[41] McQueen, 'The Work of the School of Scottish Studies', 62–3.
[42] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 233.
[43] William Lamb, 'The Storyteller, the Scribe, and a Missing Man: Hidden Influences from Printed Sources in the Gaelic Tales of Duncan and Neil MacDonald', *Oral Tradition*, 27/1 (2012): 122–3.
[44] Cailean MacGhilleathain, '"A' beothachadh na cuimhne aosda": Calum Iain MacGhilleathain (1915–1960): bho Alba gu Èirinn', *Béaloideas* 79 (2011): 10.
[45] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 229.

Bha comhairle na bu mhionaidiche ann cho math. Bha sgoilearan na Sgoile a' sgrìobhadh stiùiridhean air cruinneachadh beul-aithrise, car a' leantail an t-seòil a bh' aig Ó Súilleabháin, mun dearbh àm a thòisich Iain.[46] Dh'fhoillsich Dòmhnall Eairdsidh Dòmhnallach aiste air an robh 'Fieldwork: Collecting Oral Lore' ann am *Folklore and Folklife* le Richard Dorson ann an 1972, leabhar buadhmhor anns an raon-eòlais.[47] Tha na h-uibhir de na molaidhean aig Dòmhnall Eairdsidh cho faisg air a' mhodh-obrach a chleachdadh Iain Fhionnlaigh gur dòcha nach bu cho-thuiteamas e. Am measg na comhairle aig Dòmhnaill Eairdsidh dhan neach-cruinneachaidh ùr, bha feuch an toiseach air do chàirdean fhèin; cleachd sgioba; faighnich airson tùs an fhiosraiche; tabhainn drama uisge-beatha; agus ath-chlàraich na h-aon sheanchasan uair agus a-rithist.

Leis an eòlas agus an dealas aca, bha Iain Fhionnlaigh agus a cho-obraichean a' leudachadh lìonra chruinneachaidh na Sgoil' Eòlais air feadh na dùthcha, 's iad a' falbh air saor-làithean clàraidh, mar bu trice, anns na sgìrean dham buineadh iad. Dha Iain, b' e sin Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh, far an robh e a' saothrachadh eadar 1965 (a' bhliadhna mus do thòisich e aig an Sgoil gu foirmeil) agus 1984.

Mus toir mi sùil nas dlùithe air an obair-chruinneachaidh aige ann am Beàrnaraigh, tha e cudromach comharrachadh gun robh Iain ri obair-chlàraidh na b' fhoirmeil air làraich na Sgoil' Eòlais fhèin. Gu dearbh, ged as e Iain Fhionnlaigh as aithnichte, 's dòcha, airson na h-obrach a rinn e ann am Beàrnaraigh, b' ann an Dùn Èideann a rinn e a' chuid a bu mhotha den t-saothair, a' clàradh muinntir na Sgoil' Eòlais agus an càirdean, cho math ri Beàrndraich agus Uibhistich a bha fuireach air a' Ghalltachd:

> For a number of years the School had a sound-proof recording studio that had been built by Sandy Folkhard, the first technician, where visiting informants could be recorded. Ian Paterson, text transcriber and a most dedicated fieldworker during all his holidays in his native Berneray, always ensured that any potential informant who turned up in Edinburgh was taken there, and many excellent recordings were made in that fashion.[48]

Tha, mar eisimpleir, an obair a rinn Iain a' clàradh a' bhàird chliùitich Somhairle MacGillEathain agus an sgoileir Cheiltich an t-Urr Uilleam MacMhathain a' toirt cuimhneachain dhuinn air farsaingeachd na h-obrach aige. Agus a thuilleadh air Dùn Èideann, bha e cuideachd a' cruinneachadh ann an Glaschu, san Eilean Sgitheanach, Uibhist a Tuath agus, mu dheireadh, ann an Leòdhas. Bhiodh e mar bu trice a' clàradh Ghàidheal, ach tha cuid den obair aige sa Bheurla, sa Bheurla Ghallta, le fìor bheag ann an Gàidhlig na h-Èireann.

An Obair-chruinneachaidh ann am Beàrnaraigh

Nuair a theann Iain Peatarsan ri clàradh ann an Eilean Bheàrnaraigh mu dheireadh nan 1960an, bha a' choimhearsnachd a' dol am mùthadh an coimeas ri làithean 'òige anns na 1920an.[49] Bha àireamh an t-sluaigh air tuiteam aon trì cairteal, bho 501 ann an 1911 gu 131 ann an 1971, agus eilthireachd agus gaiseadh eaconamach nan cogaidhean mòra air làrach mhòr fhàgail air beothalachd an àite. Mar an ceudna, bha àireamh nan sgoilearan san eilean air seacadh bho cheithir fichead 's a h-aon ann an 1920 gu deichnear ann an 1971. Bha seann daoine a' riochdachadh cuibhreann mhòr den t-sluagh, gu h-àraidh ann an Ruisigearradh far an robh aon trì fichead sa cheud de mhuinntir a' bhaile os cionn trì fichead bliadhna a dh'aois. Bha dà fhichead sa cheud de na taighean anns nach robh ach aonan, cailleach no bodach, a' còmhnaidh. Bha an dàrna leth de dh'fhireannaich os cionn fichead bliadhna a dh'aois gun am pòsadh agus gun chlann aca. B' e dealbh uile-gu-lèir mì-fhallainn a bh' ann an deamografachd coimhearsnachd an eilein aig an àm.

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[46] Sean O'Sullivan, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Baile Átha Cliath: Coimisiún Béaloideasa Éireann, 1942).

[47] Donald A. MacDonald, 'Fieldwork: Collecting Oral Literature', ann an *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction,* deas. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press), 407–430.

[48] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 234.

[49] Susanne Barding, *Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh: 'Tis Fifty Years Since – A Study of Life in a Hebridean Island Community* (Eilean Leòdhais: Islands Book Trust, 2023), 218–24.

’S dòcha nach biodh e na iongnadh mar sin gun robh leithid Iain Fhionnlaigh airson dualchas-beòil coimhearsnachd ’àraich a chur air chlàr mus rachadh e à bith. Bha cor an t-sluaigh fhathast gu math tradaiseanta, le obair na croite, a’ chlò, agus an iasgaich nam pàirtean cudromach de bhith-beò nan daoine. Bha a’ Phròstanachd làidir, leis a’ chuid a bu mhotha de dhaoine a’ leantail na h-Eaglaise Stèidhichte, dòrlach dhaoine anns an Eaglais Shaor, agus an t-Sàbaid ga cumail gu cùramach. B’ i a’ Ghàidhlig ciad chainnt nan daoine, sluagh a bha, sa mhòr mhòr chuid, air an togail san eilean, neo a phòs a-steach. Feumaidh gun robh na feartan seo tarraingeach dha màthar-adhbhar na Sgoil’ Eòlais.

Càit an tòisicheadh e? Mar a chnuasaicheadh gu h-àrd, bha e na stiùireadh don neach-cruinneachaidh ùr a bhith a’ tòiseachadh leis an luchd-eòlais aca fhèin. Tha e coltach gum b’ e na chiad chlàraidhean a rinn Iain ann an 1965 aig cruinneachadh adhraidh, ’s dòcha aig àm comanachaidh nuair a thigeadh na dròbhan a Bheàrnaraigh às na Hearadh agus Uibhist a Tuath – deagh chothrom farsaingeachd dhaoine a ghlacadh aig an aon àm.[50] Fhuair Iain Fhionnlaigh cuideachadh bho Raonaid NicLeòid (1909–1988), Raonaid Ailein Lachlainn à Rubha Mhànais – ‘hunting in pairs’, mar a bheireadh Dòmhnall Eairdsidh air.[51] Bhiodh dà chomanachadh anns a’ bhliadhna, san Iuchar agus san t-Samhain, agus bu mhòr an tadhal agus an t-seinn Chrìosdail a bhiodh a’ tachairt, a’ gabhail a-steach choinneamhan-ùrnaigh. Bha na chiad chlàraidhean de dh’òrain spioradail, laoidhean, sailm, agus ùrnaighean, cuid air an gabhail còmhla mar aon agus cuid air an gabhail fa leth.[52] Rè a’ chomanachaidh, bha cuspairean saoghalta fo chuing agus mar sin chan eil e na iongnadh gum biodh beul-aithris Chrìosdail cho nochdaidh.[53] A thuilleadh air an stuth thradaiseanta a bhuineadh ris na Hearadh sa bhitheantas, bha cuid de na h-òrain anns a’ Bheurla, leithid ‘The Old Rugged Cross’,[54] a’ sealltainn mar a bha cultaran cèine, ach neo-choimheach, ag èaladh a-steach dhan eilean aig an àm.

An ath-thuras a bha Iain Fhionnlaigh ann am Beàrnaraigh ann an Dùbhlachd 1966, rinn e grunn chlàraidhean le Tormod MacPhàic (1883–1973), Tormod Ruairidh Dhòmhnaill Thormoid a thogadh ann an Cidhe Ruisigearraidh ach a chaidh a dh’fhuireach ann am Peairt. Bhiodh Tormod ris na rannan agus chlàr e grunn òran a rinn e fhèin (anns a’ Ghàidhlig agus anns a’ Bheurla), cuide ri òrain sgìreil, òrain Bheurla, fèin-eachdraidhean, agus naidheachdan eile.

Dh’fhàsadh an àireamh de chlàraidhean a rinn Iain bho 1967 a-mach, nuair a thòisich e ri cruinneachadh bho Fhlòraidh NicCumhais (1897–1971), Flòraidh nighean Iain Fhionnlaigh Thormoid, piuthar a mhàthar, cuide ri feadhainn eile. B’ e clàradh bhall den teaghlach aige fhèin seòl a leanadh air adhart.

Ri ùine, dhèanadh e mòran obair-chlàraidh am measg a theaghlaich fhèin: Flòraidh NicCumhais,[55] Cairistìona NicCumhais (1884–1968),[56] Catrìona Pheatarsan (1919–1984),[57] agus Mòrag NicGilleathain (1891–1975).[58] Bhiodh e cuideachd tric a’ clàradh nàbaidhean leithid Ciorstaidh Màiri Fleming (1908–1996)[59] agus Aonghas MacPhàic (1905–1977).[60] Chan eil teagamh,

[50] Barding, *Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh*, 431–6; Maighread A. Challan, *Air Bilean an t-Sluaigh: Sealladh air Leantalachd Beul-Aithris Ghàidhlig Uibhist a Tuath* (Béal Feirste: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2012), 57–8.
[51] MacDonald, ‘Fieldwork’, 413.
[52] Ian Paterson agus Rachel MacLeod (luchd-clàraidh), SA1965.175–SA1965.177, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann.
[53] Barding, *Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh*, 433.
[54] Norman MacKillop (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1965.175.A3, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/75340.
[55] ‘Flora MacCuish’, Hebridean Connections, https://www.hebrideanconnections.com/people/106671.
[56] ‘Christina MacCuish’, Hebridean Connections, https://www.hebrideanconnections.com/people/77002.
[57] ‘Catriona Flora Paterson’, Hebridean Connections, https://www.hebrideanconnections.com/people/105740.
[58] ‘Marion Paterson’, Hebridean Connections, https://hebrideanconnections.com/record/people/105165.
[59] ‘Chirsty Mary MacLeod’, Hebridean Connections, https://www.hebrideanconnections.com/people/104744.
[60] ‘Angus MacKillop’, Hebridean Connections, https://hebrideanconnections.com/record/people/73910.

ge-tà, nach b' e an obair-chlàraidh a rinn e còmhla ri Ceit Dix (1890–1981),[61] 's i ga meas am measg nam prìomh fhiosraichean air làraich-lìn Tobar an Dualchais air fad, a bu tharbhaiche buileach. Bheir mi sùil air an dàimh a dh'fhàs eadar an dithist sin nas fhaide air adhart.

Prìomh Fhiosraichean ann am Beàrnaraigh	**Àireamh chlàraidhean le Iain Fhionnlaigh air Tobar an Dualchais**	**Rèis beatha**	**Dlùth-Chàirdeas**	**Baile**
Ceit Dix	676	1890–1981		Aiseag
Flòraidh NicCumhais	202	1897–1971	Piuthar màthar	Cùl na Beinne
Catrìona Pheatarsan	107	1919–1984	Piuthar	Rubha Mòr/ Dùn Èideann
Ciorstaidh Màiri Fleming	103	1908-1996		Rubha Mòr
Aonghas MacPhàic	78	1905–1977		Cùl na Beinne
Murchadh Dòmhnallach	58	1901–?		Cùl na Beinne
Iain Fearghastan	57	1921–1988		Borgh
Niall Caimbeul	57	1906–1979		Ruisigearraidh
Murchadh MacLeòid	45	1904–1977		
Mòrag NicGillEathain	44	1891–1975	Piuthar athar	Rubha Mhànais

A' coimhead air na prìomh fhiosraichean aig Iain, faodar grunn fheartan fhaicinn ann an cumantas. A' chiad rud, 's e aois. Tha rèisean-beatha nam fiosraichean Beàrndrach a' sealltainn gun robh clàradh nan daoine a bu shine sa choimhearsnachd, agus a chomhaoisean fhèin cho math, fa-near dha. Chithear gun deach mòran de na clàraidhean a dhèanamh anns na bliadhnaichean mu dheireadh dem beatha. Bha sin, 's dòcha, a' leantainn feallsanachd chruinneachaidh na Sgoile anns na 1950an agus 1960an agus iad a' feuchainn ris na ginealaichean mu dheireadh a thàinig beò ann am fìor choimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig a chlàradh. Sin, no faodaidh e a bhith gun robh aoisean na bu mhotha anns an eilean anns an fharsaingeachd aig an àm sin. Bha sluagh Eilein Bheàrnaraigh a' sìor-thuiteam anns an àm ud: eadar 1961 agus 1970, thuit an àireamh-shluaigh an treas cuid (201 gu 131).[62] Thairis air an fhichead bliadhna san robh e ris an obair, chlàraicheadh Iain Fhionnlaigh faisg air dà fhichead sa cheud de mhuinntir an eilein.

An dàrna rud, 's e àite. Bhiodh Iain a' tadhail air gach pàirt den eilean air na cuairtean-clàraidh aige. 'S dòcha nach eil sin na iongnadh, agus Beàrnaraigh na eilean beag. Ach tha e ceart cuideachd gun robh làrach nam Peatarsanach anns gach baile: bha Bùth Thormoid ann an Rubha an Aoil, Borgh, air a ruith le 'cho-ogha, agus Bùth Fhionnlaigh air Rubha na Geodha Duibhe, Ruisigearraidh, air a ruith le 'phiuthar. Bhiodh an dà àite nam meadhan air fiosraichean a lorg.

Ged a thòisich e an obair-chlàraidh aig coinneamhan ùrnaigh, 's dòcha gum b' e an taigh-cèilidh am prìomh shuidheachadh clàraidh aige. Tha e cumanta gu leòr grunn fhiosraichean a bhith a'

[61] 'Catherine MacLeod', Hebridean Connections, https://www.hebrideanconnections.com/people/75597.
[62] Barding, *Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh*, 216.

nochdadh air an aon teip, 's iad a' còmhradh no a' gabhail òran ann an seòmar làn dhaoine, cuid dhiubh a' leum a-steach gus cur ris an t-seanchas no a thogail na sèiste. Anns na clàraidhean seo, tha e cudromach comharrachadh nach b' e Iain Fhionnlaigh an t-aon duine a bhiodh a' stiùireadh a' chòmhraidh: bhiodh daoine eile a' cur cheistean air càch a chèile a thuilleadh air fhèin. Ged a b' e Iain Fhionnlaigh a bha ris a' chlàradh, uaireannan cha b' esan a bha a' cur na h-agallamh, mar gum biodh. Mar a bu thrice, b' e a pheathraichean, Catrìona agus Beasag, a bha làimh ris.

Tha gun robh Catrìona agus, gu h-ìre, Beasag, peathraichean Iain, ga chuideachadh leis an obair-chruinneachaidh a' riochdachadh taobh cudromach ann an tuigsinn a' mhodh-obrach aige. 'S dòcha gum b' e Catrìona a b' fhaisge dha, ri linn agus gun robh i a' loidseadh agus a' cumail an taighe dha Iain ann an Dùn Èideann. Thigeadh i còmhla ris air na saor-làithean dhachaigh a Bheàrnaraigh. Bha Beasag na banaltram agus ag obair ann an taigh nam fònaichean, agus mar sin, bhiodh i eòlach air gu leòr de na bha a' dol, a' gabhail a-steach cò agus cuin a bu fhreagarraiche airson clàradh a dhèanamh. Mar chuideigin a bha a' fuireach ann am Beàrnaraigh fhathast, bha daoine ga faicinn gu làitheil.

Tha e doirbh dèanamh a-mach cò mheud seisean-clàraidh anns an robh Catrìona an sàs mar chuidiche o nach eil i ainmichte anns gach clàradh sam bheil i a' nochdadh. Nochdaidh i mar fhiosraiche no mar neach-clàraidh co-dhiù ann an seiseanan-clàraidh còmhla ri Mòrag NicGillEathain, piuthar am màthar, Ciorstaidh Màiri Fleming, agus Ceit Dix, a thuilleadh air grunn fhireannach. Tha an t-aon dùbhlan ro mheasadh dìleab Beasaig, ged a leanas a co-thabhartas air an aon dòigh.

A dh'aindeoin na h-obrach a rinn iad, air uaireannan cha d' fhuair iad an aithne airson an cuid saothrach air a bheil iad airidh, mar luchd-cruinneachaidh iad fhèin. Ged a tha Catrìona ainmichte mar neach-clàraidh ann an cuid de chlàraidhean air làraich-lìn Tobar an Dualchais, tha e follaiseach gu bheil cus a bharrachd ann far nach eil iad ainmichte (co-dhiù an-dràsta) air neo far an robh iad an ceann an agallaimh. Bha an dleastanasan ag atharrachadh a rèir an t-suidheachaidh agus an fhiosraiche: bhiodh Catrìona agus Beasag aon chuid a' cur nan agallamhan no a' cur ris an t-seanchas no a' riarachadh an drama agus a' frithealadh nan aoighean. Chithear sin gu follaiseach ann an dà òran air an cnuasaich mi gu h-ìseal, 'Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh' agus 'Do dh'Iain chan eil diù agam', a tha ag ainmeachadh fialaidheachd Catrìona agus Beasaig. Leis cho cudromach 's a bha na peathraichean dha obair Iain Fhionnlaigh, chan e a-mhàin gum faigh sinn tuigse às ùr air na modhan-obrach aige ach cuideachd an t-àite a dhleasas a pheathraichean ann an dìleab Iain Fhionnlaigh. Chithear mar a bha teaghlach agus luchd-eòlais aig teis-meadhan na h-obrach-cruinneachaidh aige ann am Beàrnaraigh.

Bhiodh boireannaich eile ga cuideachadh cho math. B' e Raonaid NicLeòid (1909–1988), Raonaid Ailein Lachlainn à Rubha Mhànais, a bha cuide ris, mar eisimpleir, aig na chiad chlàraidhean a rinn e aig àm a' chomanachaidh ann an 1965.[63] Bha Raonaid i fhèin na bana-sheanchaidh agus na bana-sheinneadair chomasach a rinn grunn chlàraidhean dha.

Tha e doirbh a ràdh an robh e am beachd Iain a bhith a' toirt nam peathraichean agus bhoireannach eile còmhla ris mar ro-innleachd a dh'aona-ghnothaich gus eòlas nam ban a chlàradh. Tha sgoilearan an-diugh a' tuigsinn nam beàrnan eachdraidheil ann an sgoilearachd beul-aithris nan Gàidheal a thaobh eòlas nam ban ri linn phròiseasan clàraidh, a' gabhail a-steach obair na Sgoil' Eòlais.[64] 'S math as aithne dhuinn mar a dh'fhaodadh e a bhith na bhacadh do luchd-cruinneachaidh fireann bruidhinn ri cuid a bhoireannaich, gu h-àraid gun fhireannach eile còmhla riutha, agus mar a bhiodh cuid a chuspairean fo chuing agus fo chasg an cnuasachadh agus an clàradh idir.[65] Tha deagh eisimpleir dhen seo anns an obair-chruinneachaidh a rinn Alasdair MacIlleMhìcheil, far an robh a

[63] 'Rachel MacLeod', Tobar an Dualchais, https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/person/4732.

[64] Challan, *Air Bilean an t-Sluaigh*, 179–184. Isla Parker, ''Muc Dhearg!' ors' ise: Women and Gaelic storytelling in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland *c*. 1850–*c*. 1980' (tràchdas MRes, Oilthigh Ghlaschu, 2022), 12–15.

[65] Challan, *Air Bilean an t-Sluaigh*, 9.

bhean-phòsta, Màiri Frangag NicBheathain, agus a cuid obrach carthannaich, na meadhan agus na h-iuchair dha chuid clàraidh am measg nam boireannach agus nam bochd ann an Uibhist.[66]

Ach an robh e san amas Iain gun robh a pheathraichean ann airson gnèithean seanchais a chlàradh a bhiodh gu h-àbhaisteach do-ruigsinneach dha? Cha chreid mi gun robh. 'S dòcha gum biodh na peathraichean ga dhèanamh na b' fhasa dha a dhol a chèilidh air cuid a thaighean, ach bha iad a cheart cho tric a' dèanamh cèilidh air bodaich – Aonghas MacPhàic (1907–1977), Rodaidh Iain MacLeòid (1906–1986), Donnchadh MacFhionghain (1930–), Murchadh Dòmhnallach – 's a bha air boireannaich. Dh'fhaodadh e a bhith fìor fhathast, ge-tà, gun robh leithid Ceit Dix na bu chofhurtaile ann an cuideachd nam bana-Pheatarsanach, air neo gun do cheadaich làthaireachd nam peathraichean dhi gnèithean seanchais innse.

Bhiodh Iain ag amas air suidheachadh nàdarra an taigh-cèilidh airson obair-clàraidh a dhèanamh. 'S dòcha gun robh Iain a' dèanamh seo a dh'aona-ghnothaich air sàilleabh nach robh cuid a dhaoine uile-gu-lèir cofhurtail ann an suidheachaidhean agallaimh, no gun robh coltas fuadain orra. Bhiodh e fìor a ràdh, 's dòcha, gun robh a nàdar diùid a' cur leisg air cus smachd a ghabhail air ruith a' chòmhraidh. Co-dhiù b' e bun a bh' ann gun tuigear nach b' ann le agallamhan foirmeil, cleas cuid a luchd-cruinneachaidh eile 's dòcha, a bu nàdarraiche dha ach còmhradh agus seanchas air an stiùireadh leis na bha an làthair. Tha e coltach gun robh e a' cleachdadh agallamhan aonain le cuid a dhaoine, leithid Iain Fhearghastain (1921–1988).[67] 'S dòcha, mar sin, ann an cuid a shuidheachaidhean gun robh Iain a' meas gum b' e a' chèilidh, làn aigheir is òil, a bu nàdarraiche. Faodaidh sin cur ris an tuigse a th' againn air an dòigh-obrach aige mar neach-cruinneachaidh o thaobh a-staigh na coimhearsnachd, leis gun robh e a' togail an t-seanchais agus an dualchais-bheòil mar a bu nàdarraiche e.

Mura robh cèilidh no cruinneachadh a' dol co-dhiù, mar eisimpleir pàrtaidh BEM Beasaig ann an 1970 no farpais-cheist ann an Sgoil Bheàrnaraigh ann an 1973 no coinneamh phoblach eile, bhiodh e a' cruthachadh shuidheachaidhean cèilidh tro bhith a' toirt dhaoine eile an sàs san obair. Bha an cleas seo cumanta gu leòr anns an Sgoil Eòlais, agus cèilidhean-clàraidh an Dr Alasdair MhicGillEathain ann an Uibhist a Deas a' tighinn gur n-aire.[68] Anns an t-seagh seo, b' fheàrr le Iain a bhith a' glacadh an t-seanchais fhad 's a nochdadh e gu dualchasach. Chan eil siud ri ràdh gun robh e daonnan a' cumail an inneil-chlàraidh a' dol fad seisein-chlàraidh, ach gum biodh e ga chur air nuair a nochdadh pìos a bha, na bheachd, airidh air clàradh. Bha e na chomhairle aig Dòmhnall Eairdsidh Dòmhnallach nach robh siud a' cur cus dragh air mòran, aon uair gun robh iad nan sruth seanchais.[69]

Tha an dòigh-obrach seo nas nochdaidh buileach anns na clàraidhean a rinn e den teaghlach aige fhèin, far am bu bheag an t-astar eadar fiosraiche agus neach-cruinneachaidh. Tha deagh eisimpleir air an dàimh eadar piuthar agus bràthair ann an clàradh de naidheachd èibhinn a chuala a' chlann aig an athair, Fionnlagh.[70] Tha Catrìona Fhionnlaigh, piuthar Iain, ag innse na naidheachd air a socair, ach feumaidh gun robh Iain am beachd nach robh i ga h-innse ceart. Cleas bràthair na bu shine, bhiodh e a' gearradh a-steach oirre tron chlàradh – rud nach biodh ri moladh dhan neach-cruinneachaidh phroifeiseanta. Aig deireadh a' chlàraidh, tha Catrìona le fiamh an iongnaidh oirre ag ràdh, 'cha do chuir thu siud [an t-inneal-clàraidh] air, Iain?!' 'Chuir, a h-uile facal' arsa Iain, a' sealltainn dhuinn gum biodh e uaireannan a' dèanamh peasan dheth fhèin a' falbh timcheall aig cruinneachadh leis a' chlàradair.

Bha uaireannan eile ann nuair a bha aig na fiosraichean toirt air Iain an t-inneal-clàraidh a chur dheth, co-dhiù gus am faigheadh iad an naidheachd cheart mar a bha i a' dol. Tha sin a' tachairt aig

[66] Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'The Theology of Carmina Gadelica', an *The History of Scottish Theology, Volume III: The Long Twentieth Century,* deas. David Fergusson agus Mark Elliott, 6–7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[67] Airson aithris mhionaideach air beatha Iain Fhearghastain, faic Barding, *Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh*, 93–145.

[68] Challan, *Air Bilean an t-Sluaigh*, 10.

[69] MacDonald, 'Fieldwork', 413.

[70] Catriona Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1973.122.B3, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/42144.

toiseach na naidheachd èibhinn a dh'innis C. M. Ross, tè gun aithneachadh, 'A' cur feamainn ann an uinneag airson plòigh',[71] far a bheil guth a pheathar a bu shine, Beasag (nach eil ainmichte sa chlàradh), ga earalachadh uair eile an t-inneal a chur dheth, ged a bha Iain airson an naidheachd a chlàradh ann an làrach nam bonn. Cha mhòr nach fhairichear frionas piutharail Beasaig 's i a' dèanamh cinnteach gum bi a bràthair modhail, agus stad an clàradh fad diog.

Tha e coltach gun glacadh Iain gach cothrom a gheibheadh e a dhol gu cruinneachadh far an robh muinntir an eilein. Mar eisimpleir, chaidh teip SA1970.83 a chlàradh aig cèilidh ann an Newton Lodge, Baile Mhic Phàil, nuair a chaidh urram BEM a bhuileachadh air a phiuthar, Beasag, ann an 1970. Bha òrain agus fealla-dhà gu leòr a' dol, agus cha b' urrainnear an cothrom cruinneachaidh a leigeil seachad. Mar a chluinnear ann an SA1970.83.B6,[72] sam bheil George Henderson ag innse naidheachd èibhinn mu mhinistear, tha fuaim a' chlàraidh a' fàs nas àirde agus an aithris nas soilleire fhad sa dhlùitheas Iain leis an inneal-chlàraidh an dèidh dha mothachadh gun robh seanchas air tòiseachadh aig cuideigin. Tha dealbh nam inntinn de dh'Iain ag èaladh timcheall pàrtaidh a pheathar leis an inneal-clàraidh aige an tòir air beul-aithris. Faodaidh e a bhith gun robh daoine toilichte gu leòr gun robh e ris an leithid, air neo faodaidh e a bhith nach robh duine airson bràthair na tè a bha ri moladh a chronachadh!

Bhiodh daoine uaireannan a' tarraing às Iain nuair a bha e a' clàradh agus tha e follaiseach gum biodh e a' sàrachadh dhaoine gu ìre leis an obair. Anns a' chlàr SA1972.175.B7, bha Mòrag Pheatarsan (1891–1975), Mòrag a' Chàirn, piuthar athar Iain, ag innse eachdraidh a h-athar agus a seanar, agus tha Catrìona, piuthar Iain, a' cur na cuid a bu mhotha de na ceistean.[73] Nuair a fhuair Iain cothrom a' chiad cheist aige fhaighneachd, 'agus càit a-nise an do rugadh t' athair a Mhòrag?', b' e freagairt ghrad Mòraig: 'Rugadh anns an leabaidh e, tha mi a' smaointinn'. Tha e cudromach a ràdh gun do chlàr Iain an aon eachdraidh o Mhòrag bhochd trì bliadhnaichean roimhe (clàr SA1969.81.A5–A7) agus gur dòcha gun robh i a' fàs sgìth de chuid cheistean mun aon eachdraidh. Agus leis gun robh iad càirdeach, bhiodh fios aig Iain air an fhiosrachadh co-dhiù. Ach bhiodh e ceart a ràdh gun robh e a' sealltainn cho cofhurtail agus a bha iad le chèile; chanainn nach leigeadh an nàire le Mòrag an leithid a chantainn ri srainnsear.

Cha b' e sin an aon seòrsa plòigh a bhiodh a' dol eadar Iain agus a chuid fhiosraichean. Bha tric aoireadh ga dhèanamh air a chèile ann an rannan, seòrsa bàrdachd-baile aotrom a bha cumanta ann an coimhearsnachd dhlùth. Tha deagh eisimpleir de rann a rinn Iain Fhionnlaigh mu fhiosraiche a bha a' feuchainn ri òran a chur air teip dha ann an 1967.[74] Tha an rann ag innse mar a bha Niall Caimbeul (1906–1979), Niall Chaluim Fhionnlaigh, ag iarraidh salann airson casg a chur air casad a bh' air tighinn air. Is thòisich Iain ga bhùirt.

[*Iain Peatarsan ag aithris*:]

Niall Chaluim gun anail
Le casad na amhaich
Is feumaidh e salann
  Mus gabh e dhuinn rann.
Tha anail air a tachdadh
Le casad ga bacadh
Is chan eil cungaidh no acainn

[71] C. M. Ross (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1978.82.B7, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/71424.

[72] George Henderson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1970.83.B6, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/65293.

[73] Mòrag MacLean (fiosraiche) & Catrìona Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1972.175.B7, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/73477.

[74] Ian Paterson (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1969.199, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/103931.

A bheir faochadh cho math dha
Ri salann san àm.

Rinn Iain Fhionnlaigh grunn chlàraidhean còmhla ri Niall Chaluim Fhionnlaigh eadar 1967 agus 1971, agus e am measg prìomh fhiosraichean Iain. Tha fhios, an dèidh dha Iain an rann a dhèanamh, mura rinneadh an làrach nam bonn e, gum biodh e air aithris do Niall Chaluim an ath thuras a thigeadh e air chèilidh. Fearas-cuideachd a bhiodh ann a dhaingnicheadh dàimhean sa choimhearsnachd.

Gheibheadh Iain a cheart cho math 's a bheireadh e, agus bu thoil leam sùil a-nis a thoirt air a' chàirdeas choibhneil dhlùth a dh'fhàs eadar Iain Fhionnlaigh agus Ceit an Tàilleir, am fiosraiche a bu tharbhaiche air fad aige. Chlàr Ceit Dix (1890–1981), Ceit an Tàilleir a bha a' fuireach ann an Aiseag bho 1962,[75] còrr air 600 clàradh dha Iain on ghreis-ùine eadar 1967 agus 1978.[76] Bha iomadh gnè agus seòrsa beul-aithris aice: naidheachdan, stòiridhean, eachdraidhean, dàin, bàrdachd-baile, rannan-chloinne, tòimhseachan, seanfhaclan, a bharrachd air grunnan eile. Bha i anabarrach math air bàrdachd a dhèanamh cuideachd, mar a bu thrice san t-seasamh-bhonn. B' ann mu a coimhearsnaich agus a coimhearsnachd a bha cuspairean a cuid bàrdachd. Leis a' chàirdeas a leasaich thar aon deich bliadhna, cha bu chòir dha bhith na iongnadh gum biodh Iain Fhionnlaigh na chulaidh-brosnachaidh bàrdail dhi, co-dhiù gum biodh sin gu moladh no aoireadh. Tha na pìosan bàrdachd seo, a dhèanadh fiosraiche dha neach-clàraidh, inntinneach dha-rìreabh gus tuairisgeul a thoirt dhuinn air an t-suidheachadh-chlàraidh a b' fheàrr le Iain.

Ann an 1969, thàinig Ceit air chèilidh do thaigh nam Peatarsanach airson a clàradh. Feumaidh gun do chlisg i beagan nuair a chunnacas Iain leis an inneal-chlàraidh aige air an robh a-nis casan fiodha, a chaidh a chur ris anns an ùine bho rinn iad an clàradh mu dheireadh. Tha e coltach gun d' rinn i an aoir seo, 'Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh', anns an t-seasamh-bhonn,[77] 's e a' leantail cruth agus fonn an òrain 'Clach agus Màiri' le Màiri Mhòr nan Òran. Chlàradh a-rithist e ann an 1974.[78]

[*Ceit Dix ag aithris*:]

Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh
Dhan ghiuthas làidir dhùbailte
Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh.

Thog e am bogsa air mo bheulaibh
Feuchainn an lìonainn e le breugan
Cha robh sin cho doirbh a dhèanamh
Bha Catrìona dlùth orm.
Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh.

Dh'èirich Beasag 's i cho dòigheil
'S chuir i biadh is deoch an òrdan
'S nuair a dh'òl mi fhìn mo leòr dheth
Cha robh an còrr a lùths annam.
Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh.

Ach ma chluinneas iad 'n Dùn Èideann
Mar a bhios Wally[79] falbh air chèilidh

[75] 'Catherine MacLeod', Hebridean Connections, https://hebrideanconnections.com/record/people/75597/.

[76] Gheibhear an tuilleadh fiosrachaidh mu Cheit Dix air làrach-lìn Tobar an Dualchais (www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/person/363) air neo anns an leabhar le Dix, *Ceit an Tàilleir*.

[77] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1969.87.A7, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/50579.

[78] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1974.182.A12, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/58921.

[79] B' e 'Wally' far-ainm Ceit Dix: mar eisimpleir, b' e 'Taigh Wally' ainm an taighe aice ann an Aiseag.

’G òl an fhìon air a co-chreutair
Bidh iad fhèin a’ diùmbadh rium.
Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh.

Cha ruig mi leas an còrr a ràdha
On tha fhios agam mar-thà air
Gum bi mac-na-braiche làmh rium
A h-uile ceàrn a shiùbhlas mi.
Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh
Dhan ghiuthas làidir dhùbailte
Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh.

Am measg eile tha an t-òran a’ sealltainn mar a bha deoch-làidir – fìon agus uisge-beatha – na pàirt mhòr de shuidheachadh na cèilidh aoigheil, agus ’s dòcha na h-obrach-clàraidh, agus gun leanadh e gu nàdarra gum biodh i a’ togail ceann ann an obair-chlàraidh a bha gu mòr stèidhichte anns an taigh-cèilidh. ’S dòcha gun robh beachd aig Ceit an Tàilleir gum bu dòcha nach biodh muinntir na Sgoil’ Eòlais ro thoilichte nan robh fios aca gun robh iad air an dalladh, ma b’ fhìor, fhad ’s a bha i a’ lìonadh an inneil-chlàraidh le breugan.

Tha an t-òran a’ toirt sealladh dhuinn air an spòrs agus an cridhealas a bhiodh eadar Iain, Ceit, Beasag agus Catrìona. Tha sèist an òrain a-mach air na casan a sheasadh fon mhaicreafòin, nach robh aige a’ bhliadhna roimhe, agus sùil, ’s dòcha, air leasachadh teicneòlas na h-obrach-clàraidh.

Cha b’ e siud an t-aon òran no rann a rinn i dha Iain no na Peatarsanaich. Nochd an t-òran ‘Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam’ ann an *Tocher* 20, le nòta a ràdh gum b’ e ‘a humorous reaction to the experience of being recorded by Ian Paterson and his sister Catriona, improvised almost on the spot.’[80] Chithear a-rithist liut Ceit air bàrdachd a dhèanamh ann an làrach nam bonn. Bha an tionndadh den bhàrdachd a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an *Tocher* stèidhichte air clàradh a rinn Iain còmhla ri Ceit ann an 1974,[81] ged a bha i air an òran a dhèanamh corra bhliadhna roimhe sin.[82]

[*Ceit Dix a’ seinn*:]

Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam
On rinn e fhèin cùis-bhùirte dhìom
Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam.

Thug e orm bhith seinn nan òran
Is an guth agam mar ròcais
Nuair a bhiodh iad cruinne còmhla
’G ithe ròn aig Sùlaisgeir.
Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam
On rinn e fhèin cùis-bhùirte dhìom
Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam.

Bheir mi mathanas a Chatrìona
Ged a tha i math air iarraidh
Tha i fialaidh leis an fhìon
A bh’ aice shìos sa chùlaiste.
Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam.

[80] Mrs Dix, ‘Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam’, *Tocher* 20 (1975): 134–5.
[81] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1974.182.A10, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/58921.
[82] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1971.277.A27, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/49228.

Cluinnidh iad anns an taigh-leughaidh
Is cuiridh e iad far a chèile
Is bidh a h-uile duine ag èigheachd
Nach e a’ bhèist gun ùmhlachd i.
Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam.

Cluinnidh iad am measg mo chàirdean
Mus cuir iad a-mach à Beàrn’raigh
Chan eil an còrr agam dheth an-dràsta!
Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam.

Bu chòir cuideachd iomradh a dhèanamh air a’ chiad rann anns an òran seo, far a bheil Ceit a’ cumail a-mach gu bheil Iain a’ toirt oirre a bhith a’ seinn nan òran aice seach a bhith gan aithris. Den dà òran gu h-àrd, ‘Chuir Iain casan ùr air dhomh’ agus ‘Do dh’Iain chan eil diù agam’, b’ e aithris a rinn Ceit an toiseach, ann an 1969 agus 1971. Nuair a chaidh an dà òran a chlàradh còmhla a-rithist ann an 1974, b’ e an seinn a rinn i.[83]

Bha Ceit deimhinnte nach robh deagh ghuth seinn idir aice, mar a mhìnich i grunn turais, mar eisimpleir ann an 1972 agus i ga samhlachadh fhèin mar phìob Ùisdein, a’ toirt tarraing air rann às ‘Aoir Ùisdein Phìobair’ le Donnchadh Bàn Mac an t-Saoir, a fhuair Ceit aig a h-athair.[84]

[*Ceit Dix a’ bruidhinn*:]

Tha thu Iain ag iarraidh orm-sa òran a ghabhail agus tha mi seachd sgìth ag innse dhut nach urrainn dhomh òran a ghabhail ann ’s ann tha mi coltach ri...

...muc a’ rùchdan, geòidh is thunnagan a’ ràcan
siud ’ad mar a bha pìob Ùisdean òg, gu brònach muladach a’ rànail,
a ribheid air a mùchadh, ’s an dos mòr chan fhaod e bhith làidir
’s e call daonnan air a chùlaibh na gaoth bu còir bhith dol sa mhàla.

Tha an coluadar seo na dhearbhadh dhuinn mar a bha e ann an nàdar Iain daoine a bhrosnachadh, agus fiù ’s a bhith ag obair air na h-eòlaich, gus an rachadh seanchas no òran a lìbhrigeadh a rèir mar a bha e a’ saoilsinn. Am beachd Iain, bu chòir òran a bhith air a sheinn. Cha robh leisg air a bhith a’ feuchainn air fiosraiche, fiù ’s thar bhliadhnaichean, ach am faigheadh na bha bhuaithe air chlàr. Thachradh sin fo chomhair co-theacs càirdeas coibhneil na coimhearsnachd eileanaich, far nach robh e idir na annas gum biodh daoine a’ tarraing gu h-aotrom à càch a chèile, agus far an robh a leithid ceadaichte.[85]

A thuilleadh air na h-aoirean, bha rannan molaidh ann cuideachd. Anns an rann ‘’S e Peatarsan a tha annad’ chuir Ceit an cèill gu pongail bannan a’ chàirdeis a bhlàthaich eatarra an dèidh aon deich bliadhna de dh’obair-chlàraidh.[86]

[*Ceit Dix ag aithris*:]

’S e Peatarsanach a th’ annad
’S mòr mo mhiann bhith gur n-amharc
Do dhà shùil dhonn mheallach

[83] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1974.182, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/58921.
[84] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1972.180, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/74203.
[85] Airson barrachd cnuasachaidh air an aoir ann an coimhearsnachd Bheàrnaraigh mu 1970, faic Barding, *Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh,* 467–70.
[86] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1978.85.B3, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/70511; Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1978.86.A2, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/71971.

Fo mhala [?gun sgòth]
G' 'eil blàth-fhuil nan Gàidheal ruith annainn le chèile
Cha thrèigeamaid fhéin e son seudan den òr.
B' e mo ghuidhe 's mo dhùrachd
Fhad 's a bhios sibh san dùthaich
Gum faigheadh sibh coibhneas bhiodh mùirneach gu leòr.
Gum biodh gach aon dhe ur càirdean
A' breith cridheil air làimh oirbh
'S a' ràdh 'nì mi dhàsan mo spòrs'.[87]

Dhèanadh Ceit an Tàilleir rannan molaidh air daoine eile a bhiodh an làthair aig na seiseanan-clàraidh, leithid Catrìona Pheatarsan (1919–1984), piuthar Iain. Rinn i am beannachadh 'Mìle taing dhut a Chatrìona' air a' Bhliadhn' Ùr ann an 1978.[88]

[*Ceit Dix ag aithris*:]

Mìle taing dhut a Chatrìona,
'S tu bha fialaidh leis a' hama.
Ged tha mo shùil a' call a lèirsinn
'S math as [t-fhèarr?] dhomh làn na glainne.
Òlaidh sinne ar deoch-slàinte
Ma tha e an dàn dhuinn a bhith maireann
Gus an cruinnich sinn fhathast còmhla
Ag innse stòiridhean do dh'Iain.[89]

Ann an dùnadh an rainn, cluinnear gu follaiseach mar a bha e na chleachdadh gum biodh Catrìona làimh ri Iain agus Ceit nuair a bha na seiseanan a' tachairt. Tha an clàradh fhèin (SA1978.84.A6) a' sealltainn cuideachd mar a bha Iain brosnachail foighidneach le Ceit agus i ri mearachdan, a' cantainn rithe tòiseachadh a-rithist gus an rann fhaighinn ceart air a' chlàradh.

Co-dhùnadh

Tha iomadh taobh den obair-chlàraidh agus den dìleab aig Iain Fhionnlaigh, agus ghabhadh a sgrùdadh le iomadach prosbaig. Tha sin gu h-ìre ri linn cho tarbhach agus a bha e mar neach-cruinneachaidh. Tha taobhan a bharrachd ann den duine, mar eisimpleir, mar bhàrd agus mar fhear-litreachais. San aiste seo thug mi sùil aithghearr air a shinnsearachd, an co-theacsa institiuideach san robh e ag obair, agus an modh-cruinneachaidh ann am Beàrnaraigh, a' coimhead air mar a rinn e feum den eòlas agus den chàirdeas aige ann an coimhearsnachd a dhùthchais. Bha eachdraidh nam Peatarsanach a' dearbhadh gun robh iad inbheach saidhbhir mar theaghlach, suidhichte aig stairsnich an eilein. Bha eòlas mar Ghàidheal Bheàrndrach agus ùghdarras mar mhaighstir-sgoile aig Iain a' toirt dha na sgilean sònraichte airson leithid a dh'obair a thoirt a-mach gu soirbheachail.

Gu dearbh, dh'fhaodar a ràdh gun robh Iain na sheanchaidh a cheart cho comasach ris an fheadhainn a bhiodh e a' clàradh, cleas iomadh neach-cruinneachaidh dhe leithid. Bha sin a' fàgail gum biodh a cho-luchd-dùthcha ga mheas mar an seise, nàbaidh no seann eòlach, às a' choimhearsnachd aca fhèin, a chompàirticheadh leotha anns an dualchas aca fhèin. Bha seo a' ciallachadh gun robh rathad a-staigh aige air dualchas-beòil eilean 'àraich, agus na daoine a bhiodh ga aithris, a bha sònraichte.

Mar sin dheth, cha robh astar cho mòr idir eadar e fhèin agus na fiosraichean a chlàradh e, gu seachd sònraichte leis na clàraidhean a rinn e am measg chàirdean. Bha seo cudromach ann a bhith ga

[87] Mo thaing do Chailean Gòrdan, Tobar an Dualchais, airson cuideachadh leis an tar-sgrìobhadh seo.
[88] Catherine Dix (fiosraiche), Ian Paterson (neach-clàraidh), SA1978.84.A6, Tasglann Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/71668.
[89] Dix, *Ceit an Tailleir*, 45.

stèidheachadh mar rannsaiche o thaobh a-staigh an dualchais agus na coimhearsnachd. Tha luach nach beag anns a' mhodh-obrach seo, air an do ghabh Challan 'rannsachadh fèin-dhualchais', ann a bhith a' greimeachadh air fìor nàdar an dualchais.[90] Mar a sgrìobh Carl Lindahl agus e a' meòrachadh obair na Sgoil' Eòlais:

> The structures and styles we seek are not those of formal performances. Much of the greatest verbal folk artistry is intended not as proscenium art, but rather as '*kitchen table stories*' (Lindahl 2012): intimate, conversational, and above all shared with others who have been brought up exposed to those same styles.'[91]

San aiste seo, bhathar a' cnuasachadh mar a bha Iain Fhionnlaigh a' cur gu feum a chuid chàirdean fhèin, an dà chuid mar thobraichean fiosrachaidh agus mar sgioba-raoin, airson a' cheart dhualchas – dualchas 'bòrd a' chidsin' – a chruinneachadh. Tha na fhuair e de bhàrdachd-baile agus aoireadh nàbaidheil, am measg eile, a' dearbhadh cho sònraichte agus a tha an clàr cruinneachaidh aige. Ri linn cho nàdarra agus a bha an dualchas-beòil ud, gheibhear beachd air mar a bha an dualchas-beòil ga thoirt seachad ann an coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig am measg teaghlaichean agus nàbannan, ann an riochd rannan beaga agus naidheachdan aotrom, cho math ri litreachas-beòil mòr.

A' breithneachadh air dìleab Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba, sgrìobh an Dr Iain MacAonghuis:

> In popular esteem, the reputation of the School of Scottish Studies is based not on the books and articles which some of its members have published, but on the existence of its unique Sound Archive.[92]

Gu dearbh, 's e aon de dh'ìoranasan àraid na Sgoil' Eòlais nach robh an tasglann am beachd an Oilthigh bho thùs, 's iad a' dèanamh soilleir nach robh an seòrsa obair-chruinneachaidh ris an robh Iain Fhionnlaigh gu feum nan sùilean-san.[93] Ge b' oil leis na h-urracha mòra, chaidh stòras gun phrìs a thrusadh le luchd-obrach na Sgoil' Eòlais, agus Iain Peatarsan am measg an luchd-cruinneachaidh a bu tharbhaiche a chuir ri Tasglann Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba. Tha e na adhbhar-iongnaidh gun robh a shaothair gu saor-thoileach agus a thabhartas air a thoirt seachad gu deònach dùrachdach.

Tha obair Iain Fhionnlaigh a' toirt sealladh dhuinn a tha gach cuid prìseil, dlùth agus mionaideach air dualchas-beòil Eilein Bheàrnaraigh anns na bliadhnaichean eadar 1970 agus 1980. Chuir an obair sin gu mòr ris an adhbhar gu bheil an sgìre air aon den fheadhainn as fheàrr air a riochdachadh ann an Tasglann na Sgoil' Eòlais agus air làraich-lìn Tobar an Dualchais bhon àm ud.

Tha cho beairteach 's a tha na chruinnich e mar thoradh air cho eòlach agus a bha Iain Fhionnlaigh ann am Beàrnaraigh. Chan e a-mhàin gun d' fhuair e togail ann an coimhearsnachd làidir dhùthchasach ach gun robh an teaghlach aige aig teis-meadhan beatha na coimhearsnachd, a' leigeil le Iain na lìonraidhean aige fhèin agus aig a theaghlach – càirdean, nàbaidhean, buill coithional na h-eaglaise agus coimhearsnachd an eilein – a chur gu feum mar chlach-oisne na saothrach clàraidh aige. Bha siud na bhunait don mhodh-obrach aige.

Ged a bu tharbhach e, chan eil cliù mòr aige am measg prìomh luchd-cruinneachaidh na Sgoile. Carson? 'S dòcha gun canadh cuid gu bheil cion a chliù ri linn nach b' e sgoilear stèidhichte a bh' ann, ged a bha e air fhastadh na òraidiche aig Sgoil Eòlas na h-Alba fad grunn bhliadhnaichean mu dheireadh a chosnaidh. 'S dòcha gum biodh e ceart a ràdh nach do dh'fhoillsich e mòran sgoilearachd, a bharrachd air tar-sgrìobhainnean ann an *Tocher* agus saothair a làimhe fhèin ann an *Gairm*. Bidh daoine mar an ceudna a' caoidh nach do dh'fhoillsich leithid Dhòmhnaill Eairdsidh Dhòmhnallaich na h-uimhir a sgoilearachd. Ach b' e sin adhbhar na Sgoil' Eòlais anns an àm ud, a rèir an luchd-obrach co-dhiù: clàraich an-dràsta,

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[90] Challan, *Air Bilean an t-Sluaigh*, 8.

[91] Carl Lindahl, 'The School of Scottish Studies, an Island Community', ann an *The Carrying Stream Flows On: Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the School of Scottish Studies,* deas. Bob Chambers (Ciarsiadar, Eilean Leòdhais: Islands Book Trust, 2013), 238.

[92] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 229.

[93] MacInnes, 'Reminiscences', 232–3.

sgrùdaich uair eile. Co-dhiù, dh'aontaicheadh Iain Fhionnlaigh ris na chuir Dòmhnall Eairdsidh an cèill: gun robh deagh chlàradh cus na bu phrìseile na aiste air a sgrìobhadh.[94] Nach e a rinn sin.

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[94] Bo Almqvist, 'Donald Archie MacDonald (1929–1999)', *Béaloideas* 67 (1999), 67.

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‘Both Sides of the Tweed’: Relations, tensions and identity of Scottish Backhold and Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling

TREVOR HILL

Abstract
Little academic attention has been given to two closely-related styles of traditional wrestling in Great Britain: Scottish Backhold (‘Backhold’) and Cumberland & Westmorland (‘C/W’) Wrestling. Both sports are represented by the Scottish Wrestling Bond and the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association, and while each organisation maintains its own traditions and practices, they are able to participate in each other’s competitions as well as in international tournaments. Many areas of mutual satisfaction and respect exist between the two organizations and especially amongst the wrestlers themselves. There have, however, been areas of tension between the two groups. This article will explore several such issues that arose between 1998 and 2002, including regulations concerning dress, number of falls to a bout, and alleged non-recognition of certain techniques. We shall then discuss developments in Scottish Backhold between 2014 and 2019; and lastly, we shall examine the recent rise in female participation in what has historically been a male-dominated sport. This analysis raises questions of tradition, as well as potential breaks from tradition, in the development of both types of traditional wrestling. It also attempts to partially redress the lack of academic scrutiny, particularly with regard to Scottish Backhold.

Wrestling is an ancient sport worldwide, and has a long history in the British Isles, with wrestlers depicted on carved crosses in Ireland as well as on carved stones in Scotland dating from the sixth and seventh centuries.[1] Medieval wooden church carvings found throughout England depict forms of ‘jacket’ and ‘belt’ wrestling, in which competitors wear special jackets and/or belts which may be grasped during a bout.[2] Literary references are plentiful: in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, the Miller is described as a wrestler, as is Orlando in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*.[3] In the nineteenth century, Thomas Hardy included a wrestling scene in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and R. D. Blackmore’s 1869 novel *Lorna Doone* portrayed an important character, John Ridd, as a wrestler. In Scottish literature, Sir Walter Scott’s protagonist in *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) defeats several ‘manly wrestlers’;[4] and two novellas in James Hogg’s *Winter Evening Tales* (1820) depict wrestling scenes.[5]

Some older forms of wrestling in Britain and Ireland have died out, arguably with the advent of ‘modern’ styles such as Olympic Freestyle, Greco-Roman and Judo. In addition, the performance-

[1] Mike Tripp, *Cornish Wrestling: A History* (St Agnes: Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 2023), 23–31; William Baxter, ‘New Vigour in our Oldest Sport’, *RLHF Journal* 8 (1997) https://rlhf.info/wp-content/uploads/8.2-Wrestling-Baxter.pdf. Also, search ‘wrestling’ at http://www.irishmegaliths.org.uk/crosses2.htm.

[2] Roger Robson, *Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling: A Documented History* (Cumbria: Bookcase, 1999), 9–10; for illustrations, see https://www.traditionalsports.org/traditional-sports/europe/catch-hold-england.html.

[3] Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 547–550; William Shakespeare, *As You Like It,* Act I, scene 2.

[4] Canto V, stanza 23.

[5] James Hogg, *Winter Evening Tales,* ed. Iain Duncan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2004), ‘The Bridal of Polmood’, 259–357, and ‘The Love Adventures of Mr George Cochrane’, 166–228.

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based 'All-In Wrestling', based on a 'catch-as-catch-can' style and a forerunner to modern Professional Wrestling (WWE), emphasises 'worked' (i.e. fixed) matches. Mike Tripp writes how increased match-fixing was a significant factor in the decline of Cornish wrestling, whilst Robert Snape links the rise of All-In Wrestling and match-fixing to a decline in traditional styles nationally.[6] Such problems led in 1906 to the establishment of The Association Governing Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling.

Despite these challenges, there are still pockets of the country where traditional forms are regularly practiced, most notably the 'jacket' style in Cornwall – its sister style in Devonshire died out in the early twentieth century – and the 'backhold' styles in northern England and Scotland. The northern English style is commonly referred to as 'Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling' (occasionally just 'Cumberland'), despite the fact that it is also practiced in neighbouring Northumberland and Lancashire. In Scotland, the traditional form is today known as (Scottish) Backhold Wrestling.[7] The sports are governed by the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association (hereafter CWWA) and the Scottish Wrestling Bond (SWB).[8] An international circuit has been established under the banner of the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling (IFCW), founded in 1985, which organises international competitions in the 'backhold' and 'gouren' (Breton) styles, and supports local traditions elsewhere in Europe.[9]

Both Scottish Backhold wrestling (hereafter 'Backhold') and Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling (C/W) are predominantly practised on grass at events such as Highland gatherings or country shows.[10] Both differ from the more widely known 'Olympic' styles of Greco-Roman and Freestyle in that a wrestler maintains a fixed hold, hands clasped behind the opponent's back, while attempting to throw or trip the other competitor; the bout ends when a wrestler touches the ground with any part of the body other than the feet. Technically, the Backhold and C/W styles are almost identical, the main differences being in regulations and attire. Competitors from both sides of the border regularly participate in each others' events as well as in international tournaments and, historically, Scotland versus Cumbria tournaments. Prizes for tournaments include money, belts and cups (some of them very old) and occasionally, in Scotland, quaichs (drinking cups).

There have been, however, some points of disagreement between supporters of the two styles. These came to the fore at the end of the last century in a discussion between William Baxter, then president of the Scottish Wrestling Bond (SWB), and Roger Robson, a senior figure in the Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association (CWWA). A former C/W wrestling champion, newspaper columnist, and two-term president of CWWA, Robson self-published a monthly newsletter, *Inside Hype*, which focused on the C/W wrestling scene.[11] In the September/October 1999

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[6] Mike Tripp, 'Match-Fixing in Cornish Wrestling during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 35/2–3: Special Issue: Match-Fixing and Sport: Historical Perspectives (2017): 157–172; Robert Snape, 'All-in Wrestling in Inter-War Britain: Science and Spectacle in Mass Observation's "Worktown"', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 30/12 (2013): 1418–1435.

[7] Robson, *Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling,* 1999, and William Baxter, "Wrestling (The Ancient Modern Sport)," In *Eclipse et Renaissance des Jeux Populaires*, edited Jean-Jacques Barreau, Guy Jaouen, 64–88, FALSAB, 1998, 72–73.

[8] Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association, https://www.cwwa.org.uk/. Scottish Wrestling Bond, http://www.wrestle.co.uk/swcp1.htm. The latter site has not been updated in some years, but contains useful historical information and illustrations.

[9] *Gouren* ('wrestling' in Breton) is a style of jacket wrestling, similar to Cornish wrestling. Useful descriptions of other European wrestling styles can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_wrestling.

[10] The capitalised form 'Backhold' is used here to refer to the Scottish tradition; the uncapitalised spelling refers to the technical style of wrestling.

[11] Roger Lytollis, 'Cumberland wrestling legend Roger Robson grapples with retirement', *News and Star with the Cumberland News*, 27 May 2019. *Inside Hype* was published between 1993 and 2001.

issue, Baxter contributed an article entitled 'Refereeosis' that extolled the progressiveness of Scottish Backhold and the superiority of its training, and criticized what he saw as problematic attitudes (for Scottish wrestlers) on the part of some C/W officials.[12] Among the items of contention were rules concerning the wearing of the kilt, the number of falls in a bout, and referees' alleged attitudes to unfamiliar techniques. Eight months later, Robson responded in an article of his own, 'Answering Back to Willie'.[13] The differences expressed in these two articles, and the developments that emerged from them, will be a major focus of our discussion here.

Background and methodology

This article will examine the relationship between Scottish Backhold Wrestling and Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling in the period 1998–2002, when the writer was competing as a wrestler whilst undertaking informal fieldwork as a casual researcher. Discussion of subsequent developments in Scotland is based on conversations and communications with wrestlers in the period 2012–2020, including answers to a prepared questionnaire circulated amongst members of a particular wrestling club. Because of the lack of sociological and anthropological research and literature on this topic, much of the discussion is based on interviews with wrestlers and questionnaires developed by the author, as well as on sports histories and articles in popular publications. Because the research period spans some twenty years but was not continuous over that period, some personal background may be called for.

I first became interested in Backhold wrestling in 1998 whilst undertaking postgraduate studies at the University of Edinburgh and preparing research on Balkan oiled wrestling.[14] I trained in Backhold and competed at events in Scotland and northern England, representing Scotland in a special indoor event titled 'North vs South vs Scotland' which involved teams from two regions of northern England and one from Scotland.[15] I also attended a major international event as a spectator. Although none of this was formal research, I made some field-notes and conducted some informal interviews and conversations on these occasions.

In 2002 I moved to Poland and, apart from some sporadic communication with some of the wrestlers, engaged in no significant research until around 2014. At that time, having noted that little or no academic attention had been paid to this topic in the previous twenty years, I began to look again at the earlier notes and consider committing to further enquiry. In this situation, it proved useful to try to trace developments between the period when I myself was active in the sport (1998–2002), and the modern face of Scottish Backhold. The retrospective approach does have its drawbacks, in that some questions raised by reviewing the earlier period are seemingly addressed by informants or information from the later period. While I acknowledge that this may be a flaw in my own work, it may also highlight areas for further enquiry and provide a foothold for other researchers approaching the subject.

In an era of mass-marketing and globalisation, expressions of cultural identity become particularly interesting. Some of my curiosity about Scottish Backhold and Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling stemmed from my earlier work on Balkan wrestling, which examined cultural expression and tradition in the context of that sport. In addition, it seemed worthwhile to explore how things might have changed and advanced in both sports over the two periods of my involvement with them. Because the two styles have shared so much common history and practice, the disagreements over matters of attire and other shared problems seemed a good starting point.

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[12] William Baxter, 'Refereeosis', *Inside Hype* 40 (Sept/Oct 1999), 5–7.

[13] Roger Robson, 'Answering Back to Willie', *Inside Hype* 43 (June 2000), 7.

[14] Trevor Hill, 'Wrestling with Identities? Masculinity, Physical Performance and Cultural Expression in Pehlivan Wrestling in Macedonia', *The International Journal of Albanian Studies* 2/1 (Spring 1998): 106–126.

[15] These events, which were discontinued around 2000, alternated between venues in Scotland and England and were an example of arranged cross-border contests.

Because I no longer live in the UK, the second stage of my research has relied more on internet-based resources and communication (social media and email) and written materials including back issues of the now-defunct *Inside Hype*. One club trainer agreed to circulate a questionnaire among his members to try to gauge a wider selection of views about the sport from current participants concerning aspects of training, competition and Scottish identity; ten replies were received, a response rate of seventeen percent.

The Literature

While scholars elsewhere have begun to examine traditional wrestling styles,[16] academic research of a sociological/anthropological nature concerning C/W and Scottish Backhold is not plentiful. Indeed, there are few detailed works on wrestling in Scotland, especially Backhold, at all. The more informative texts are by writers such as William Baxter, who has examined Scottish Backhold as a historical and modern sport and outlined some of the early history of the SWB.[17] Webster and Dinnie's biography of the nineteenth-century Scottish athlete Donald Dinnie is also useful in illustrating some historical aspects of the sport both domestically and internationally.[18]

As regards Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling, several works from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries deal with the development of the sport in the English Lake District. Gilpin and Robinson's *Wrestlers and Wrestling* (1892) presents a collection of short texts about different wrestling styles from around the world along with a collection of biographies of several nineteenth-century C/W champions.[19] One of these, the wrestler William Litt (1785–1847), himself published *Wrestliana* (1823), generally held to be the first history of wrestling in England.[20] An interesting sequel to Litt's account is a biography of William by his descendant, English novelist Toby Litt. As well as providing interesting historical data, the book follows Toby's research path, including his own attempts at C/W Wrestling. Toby Litt's work provides not only an interesting picture of an outsider coming to the sport for the first time, but also a description of a Scottish/Icelandic bout in Cumbria.[21]

A vital tool for researching Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling in the more recent past has been *Inside Hype*, the newsletter edited and published until 2001 by the late Roger Robson. In addition, Robson's frequent contributions to local newspapers contained his views on aspects of the sport, such as the debate over traditional attire, as we shall discuss below. His history of Cumbrian wrestling, a small but highly informative work aimed at both the general reader and the researcher/historian, includes information about the early relationship with the Scottish Wrestling Bond.[22]

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[16] See, for example, Joseph S. Alter, *The Wrestler's Body: Identity and Ideology in North India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

[17] William Baxter, 'Wrestling (The Ancient Modern Sport)', in *Les Jeux Populaires – Éclipse et Renaissance: Des traditions aux régions de l'Europe de demain*, ed. Jean-Jacques Barreau and Guy Jaouen (FALSAB, 1998), 64–88.

[18] David Webster and Gordon Dinnie, *Donald Dinnie: The first sporting superstar* (Aberdeen: Ardo Publishing Co., 1999).

[19] Sidney Gilpin and Jacob Robinson, *Wrestling and Wrestlers: Biographical Sketches of Celebrated Athletes of the Northern Ring; to Which is Added Notes on Bull and Badger Baiting* (HardPress Publishing, 2016).

[20] William Litt, *Wrestliana: or an historical account of ancient and modern wrestling* (London: Forgotten Books Ltd, 2018).

[21] Toby Litt, *Wrestliana* (Galley Beggar Press, 2018), 118.

[22] Robson, *Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling*.

The most useful recent academic works dealing with Cumberland and Westmoreland Wrestling are those of Mike Huggins, who explores the links between sport and identity, particularly that of Cumbrian local identity. A 2001 article explores how the identity of C/W was regularly reinvented as Romanticism and the subsequent rise in nineteenth-century tourism in the Lake District created interest in local traditions and practices which eventually became examples of cultural markers.[23] In a subsequent work, Huggins examines Lakeland Sports (fell running, hound racing and C/W wrestling), providing useful insights into how cultural (and possibly political) identity is expressed through sporting practice, something which shall be touched upon in the following discussion.[24] Other recent texts referring to C/W, such as the *World Sports Encyclopedia,* are generally descriptive rather than analytical and, as such, are of limited use to a researcher.[25]

Fig. 1 Taking hold.

Fig. 2 A third wrestler is used to ensure an equal hold.

Regarding other British styles, Mike Tripp’s 2023 book *Cornish Wrestling: A History*, based on his 2009 PhD, is a highly detailed history of the sport, covering aspects such as emigration and the practice of the style in the Cornish diaspora as well as the decline in traditional wrestling in Britain.[26] It provides an insightful account of the complex social and cultural factors affecting small, regional sports and their associated traditions. It is hoped that similar research may yet focus on the subject of Scottish Backhold and Cumbrian/Westmorland Wrestling.

Traditional Wrestling in Britain: The Backhold Style

In backhold wrestling, two competitors take hold of each other, each with the left arm over the opponent’s right and hands gripped behind the opponent’s back between the shoulders (*Fig. 1*).[27] The grip is formed by hooking the fingers of each hand inside the other; fingers are not interlocked, as this can be dangerous. In Scottish Backhold, if two wrestlers fail to take a correct hold, a third wrestler may be called to bend over between them, allowing the competitors to form a bridge over the third one to take an even hold (*Fig. 2*).

[23] Mike Huggins, ‘The Regular Re-Invention of Sporting Tradition and Identity: Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling c.1800–2000’, *The Sports Historian* 21/1 (May 2001), 35–55.

[24] Mike Huggins, ‘Sport helps make us what we are: the shaping of regional and local sporting identities in Cumbria c.1800–1960’, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* XI (2011), 81–96.

[25] Wojciech Lipoński, *World Sports Encyclopedia* (Poznań: Oficyna Wydawnicza Atena, 2003), 150–151.

[26] Mike Tripp, *Cornish Wrestling: A History* (St Agnes: Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, 2023).

[27] Photos in figures 1–4 were taken by the author between 1999 and 2002. The referee in Figs. 2 and 4 is William Baxter.

Once the correct hold is established, the third wrestler leaves and the call to wrestle is given. When the bout begins, the wrestlers attempt to trip or throw their opponent whilst maintaining the correct hold. The first wrestler to either break their hold or touch the floor or ground with anything other than their feet (a fall) loses the bout (*Fig. 3*). If both wrestlers touch the ground simultaneously, the fall – called a 'dog fall' – is void, and the wrestlers have to restart. The basic backhold techniques are nearly identical either side of the border, although Baxter claimed that some Cumbrian referees might disallow certain moves (the *salto* and *souplesse*) adopted from Greco-Roman wrestling. Consequently, Scottish wrestlers tended to avoid using those techniques in England for fear of having the fall called against them.[28]

Fig. 3 Breaking hold.

The main differences between Scottish Backhold and C/W styles involve rules and regulations. In Scottish competition, for example, whoever scores the best of five falls is declared the winner of that match, whereas Cumberland matches are decided on the best of three or even a single fall, as Baxter lamented in *Inside Hype*.[29] Another major difference is that CWWA rules allow adult females to compete in single-sex bouts only, whereas Backhold allows mixed matches.[30] Indeed, it is not unusual to see a female wrestler taking prizes, including cash, cups, and medals – or even a quaich.

Despite being found in Northumberland and elsewhere, this style of wrestling has become strongly associated with the Lake District of northwest England, arguably because of the rise in tourism to the region in the nineteenth century, and the fact that the first known history of English wrestling was written by a Cumbrian wrestler. William Litt's *Wrestliana* (1823) included a broad history of wrestling, a more specific account of the Cumberland and Westmorland style, and some suggestions for modernizing the rules. In addition, Litt amusingly reviewed how wrestling was portrayed in the classics, including works by Homer, Chaucer, Shakespeare and, interestingly, Hogg, whose 1820 novella 'The Bridal of Polmood' he particularly approved of. While Hogg does not specify the style of wrestling, his story contains a wrestling scene where 'Carmichael was extremely hard to please of his hold and caused his antagonist [Polmood] to lose his grip three or four times and change his position.' Polmood later '…forced in Carmichael's back with such a squeeze that the by-standers affirmed they heard his ribs crash; whipped him lightly up in his arms and threw him upon the ground with great violence'.[31] Litt's interest in this scene, in which Hogg describes the competitors' dispute regarding the hold, and the squeezing of Carmichael's ribs by Polmood, suggest that Hogg is describing a match in the Backhold style.[32] Litt was not the only nineteenth-century author interested

[28] Baxter, 'Refereeosis', 7

[29] Baxter, 'Refereeosis', 6.

[30] CWAA rules do, however, permit mixed matches for children.

[31] Hogg, 'The Bridal of Polmood', 270; William Litt, *Wrestliana,* 16.

[32] It is intriguing to speculate about a possible acquaintance between James Hogg and William Litt. Toby Litt, (*Wrestliana*, 146–153) suggests that his ancestor and William Wordsworth had met, and that both knew John Wilson (a.k.a. Christopher North, 1785–1854), a Scottish author and critic who also organised sporting events. Hogg is known to have accompanied Wordsworth and Wilson to the Lake District in 1814 (Richard Jackson, 'James Hogg and the Unfathomable Hell', *Romanticism on the Net* 28 (November 2002)). My attempts to ascertain what impact, if any, this excursion had on Hogg's interest in wrestling have as yet been unsuccessful.

in the style: Charles Dickens later wrote about it for his magazine *Household Words* in an 1858 article called 'Feats at the Ferry', in which he describes a bout at the Ferry Ring, Windermere.[33]

Backhold wrestling remained popular into the twentieth century in other parts of England, including London and Merseyside. It featured in some of the early regional Olympic Games, including the so-called Morpeth Olympics in Northumberland.[34] However, throughout the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries the popularity of backhold wrestling in England declined, and it is now almost entirely restricted to its home region and Northumbria. The Association Governing Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling, the forerunner of the CWWA, was established in 1906.

Backhold in Scotland

The history of Backhold in Scotland is more difficult to ascertain. Gilpin and Robinson suggest that, after borderland sports declined following the Reformation, the Cumberland style entered Scotland in the 1820s with a revival of traditional sporting events; both Walter Scott and James Hogg are supposed to have taken part in these.[35] If, however, as Robson suggests, Hogg's writings feature Backhold, then it presumably existed prior to that period, although Gilpin and Robinson do not entertain the notion of a shared cross-border style existing beforehand.[36] Whether or not Gilpin and Robinson's theory is correct, the similarity in style has allowed cross-border competitions to continue to this day, with a number of wrestlers, both English and Scottish, travelling to fixtures either side of the border, although the number of Scots travelling south has been, and still is, higher than those going north.

Exactly when the name 'Backhold' was first used in Scotland is unclear. The style seems to have been internationally known until fairly recently as 'the Cumberland style', even in Scotland. One Northumbrian wrestler told me in 2020:

> It has always been Cumberland and Westmorland style wrestling. When my grandparents wrestled in Scotland eons ago it was Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling at Braemar and all other games. In my day it was Highland wrestling, and within 10 years Scotland have been calling it Backhold.

However, renowned Scottish wrestler and athlete Donald Dinnie (1837–1916) noted that his first wrestling match for a cash prize, at a Highland Games circa 1852, was 'in the back-hold style', although Dinnie himself occasionally competed in 'Cumberland' matches in the USA and Australia.[37]

While Scotland once boasted a number of different styles, Backhold is today the most widely practiced of the traditional styles.[38] 'Widely-practiced', however, is perhaps a misleading term as hardcore competitors probably only number around a couple of hundred. During my initial research, competitors at events I witnessed rarely numbered more than fifty, including children. While wrestlers

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[33] Robson, *Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling*, 33–39.

[34] Jörg Krieger, 'Cotswold, Much Wenlock, Morpeth – 'Olympic Games' before Pierre de Coubertin, in *Olympia. Deutschland – Großbritannien,* ed. Stephan Wassong, Jurgen Buschmann and Karl Lennartz (Carl-und-Liselott-Diem-Archiv, 2012), 23–37.

[35] Gilpin and Robinson, *Wrestling and Wrestlers*, 37.

[36] Robson, *Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling*, 21.

[37] Webster and Dinnie, *Donald Dinnie*, 13. Dinnie was skilled in several styles, including the 'Scotch' or 'Scottish' style, a style that involved ground wrestling (Webster and Dinnie, *Donald Dinnie*, 61). The now defunct style, developed by Dinnie in 1870s, would start in a backhold position and continue on the ground (Baxter, *Wrestling,* 85).

[38] Baxter, 'Wrestling', 75–6. Baxter cites five styles, the other four in addition to Backhold being Catch-as Catch-Can (similar to Olympic Freestyle wrestling); Loose Hold (a standing style with no fixed hold); Carachd Bharraidh (a form of freestyle from the Isle of Barra); and Carachd Uibhist (a Hebridean backhold style allowing hip throws but no trips).

I have spoken to say that there has been some increase in participation in recent years, participant numbers still appear to be fairly low in comparison to other traditional sports.

The majority of Backhold events take place under the mantle of the Scottish Wrestling Bond (SWB), founded in 1992 by William Baxter, himself a former Catch-as-Catch-Can/Freestyle competitor and Olympic coach, who felt that the sport was not receiving enough support from the Scottish Amateur Wrestling Association (SAWA). He explained his thinking in a 2002 interview:[39]

> They were trying to discourage people from practising Backhold. It was very short sighted, as they felt we should emphasize the Olympic style of wrestling. We felt the indigenous style was at least as important as the Olympic style.

The importance of the indigenous style did not, however, guarantee government support. Baxter was not impressed when SAWA received Sports Council funding to hire a Russian coach and international wrestlers whilst SWB received no financial backing. Robson's complaint that the Cumbrian association experienced a similar lack of recognition demonstrated that despite their differences, traditional sports often face common administrative challenges.[40]

From the outset, SWB realised it had to expand if it was to survive. Links were made with Highland games organisations and other bodies for traditional sports, and SWB wrestlers continued to compete in English competitions as well as within the International Federation of Celtic Wrestling. Baxter had already established ties with CWWA as early as 1986 when, as part of the SAWA, he addressed a meeting of the Cumbrian association about cooperation. Some members of the board were wary, feeling that a closer link might compromise local traditions, and some CWWA committee members resigned;[41] but the SWB was nevertheless able to continue competing each side of the border. This was particularly important for SWB as a fledgling organisation with few domestic competitions,[42] as it allowed Scottish Backhold competitors to take advantage of the CWWA's larger pool of more experienced wrestlers and the much larger calendar of events. Scottish wrestlers subsequently had a lot of success in both English and international competitions, and in 1999–2000 they held five of the eleven C/W titles.

Clubs and Training, 1998–2002

When I first contacted SWB in Glasgow in 1998, there were seven or eight clubs in the city, as well as small groups training elsewhere in the country. In Dundee, Michael Philips trained a group of around thirty boys in the sport, transporting them to tournaments in a bus and occasionally turning the weekend into a camping trip. The Glasgow clubs, by Baxter's own admission, were not necessarily run to a high standard. They were predominantly attended by teenagers and children, a fact that made it difficult for a novice adult like me to train regularly with a suitable partner.[43]

While the youngsters would be shown a technique and then paired up to practice, the absence of a suitable partner for a man of my size (1.85 cm, 90 kg) meant that I was shown how to practice the technique on my own with an 'empty' hold, usually completing the move with a body roll. For example, a 'front trip' required a wrestler to push their hands forward as they stepped in, pushing the opponent backwards and then pulling the hands backwards into the small of the opponent's back. The attacker then puts weight and motion onto the upper body to force the opponent to arch their back and fall backwards. To practice this move 'empty', the wrestler pulls the hands into their own stomach, moves their head downward, and goes into a forward roll – the head position being very important in creating the required body twist. Baxter, who invented this training technique, laughed

[39] Trevor Hill, 'An Interview with William Baxter', *Martial Arts Illustrated* 15/1 (June 2002): 46.

[40] Roger Lytollis, 'Cumberland wrestling legend Roger Robson grapples with retirement', *News and Star with the Cumberland News*, 27 May 2019.

[41] Robson, *Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling*, 81.

[42] Several Highland games organisers, working with SAWA, sponsored Freestyle wrestling competitions.

[43] Hill, 'Interview with William Baxter', 46.

at my first attempts: ‘If this was Japan, they’d call it “kata”!’ The technique was, however, quite effective in my case. In competition, I might half complete a technique (such as apply the correct leg positions) but not complete the throw; but when I remembered to adjust my head position, my body would go into the correct pose, and the throw seemed to follow through on its own.

Baxter maintained that Scottish wrestlers were successful, despite their small number, due to being ‘fitter and stronger than the English because of our more intense training’.[44] Robson, however, argued that Scottish wrestlers got more experience because they were also practicing other disciplines:[45]

> [T]he main differences I have noticed is that they have served long apprenticeships to hone their skills, they wrestle more frequently than ever and they think of themselves as specialist Backhold wrestlers rather than as free-style wrestlers or Judo-players who sometimes wrestle in the Cumberland style.

Whichever of them was correct, it cannot be disputed that the small number of regular adult attendees were – and still are – boosted by members of local Judo clubs who adapted their techniques to Backhold.

Robson indirectly raised an interesting point by comparing the training regime of Scottish Backhold wrestler Robert Clark, believed by many to regularly ‘pump iron’, with that of Tom Harrington MBE, a C/W wrestling legend who was noted for *not* doing so. What Robson failed to mention was that many Cumbrian wrestlers worked on farms and presumably regularly had to lift heavy objects like sacks of feed and possibly animals – daily training that a Glasgow-dwelling wrestler might be hard-pressed to replicate. A study of Breton *gouren* wrestling makes a similar observation about that sport which, despite its background among rural labourers, is today probably practised more by middle class urbanites.[46] Such differences would make an interesting subject for future research.

More recently, younger wrestlers, some of whom were minors during my time in the sport, have started their own Backhold clubs and adopted a more systematic and professional approach to training. This change has, in some instances, also brought about a different attitude towards teaching novices. In the past, it had been remarked that some champions were guarded about passing on techniques that might put them at risk of being beaten, and that the persistent dominance of some champions discouraged newcomers.[47] If the sport was to be promoted, such attitudes needed to change – and they may have begun to do so. One of the questionnaire responders, a former judoka, wrote in 2013 of a more open attitude to sharing:

> One of my most memorable experiences was going to my first tournament and just seeing how it was different from a Judo tournament. After fighting one boy (who annihilated me), he then came over and showed me what it was I was doing wrong and how to correct it, not something you’d see in Judo.[48]

While over the last fifteen years the increased consistency in training seems to have attracted newcomers of a more mature age, especially from other disciplines – one 2014 recruit who joined the Hamilton club was a judoka in her 50s – many younger athletes have been attracted to the burgeoning

[44] Baxter, ‘Refereeosis’, 9.

[45] Robson, ‘Answering back to Willie’, 13.

[46] Dario Nardini and Aurélie Épron, ‘Being Breton through wrestling: Traditional gouren as a distinctive Breton activity’, *Ethnography* 22/3 (2021): 12.

[47] My own experience as a beginner bore out these observations. During a training session I recall one wrestler, a champion Judo player and instructor, who continually felled me with an advanced technique, despite knowing that I had less than a year’s experience of the sport. By contrast, other established wrestlers, including some champions, took time to show me their techniques and let me practice them, allowing themselves to be thrown.

[48] Questionnaire respondent, 15 November 2013.

sport of Mixed Martial Arts. One coach estimated the membership of SWB at around 100–120 just before the pandemic. It remains to be seen how numbers will change in the future.

Competition and Highland Games

Just as the Cumberland-Westmorland competitions take place at country fairs and agricultural shows, so the major venue for Backhold wrestling in Scotland is Highland games. Kilted wrestlers may be found amidst scores of marching pipe bands, traditional dancers, caber-tossers and other activities. For many wrestlers, a major feature of Highland games is the presence of bagpipes. While these do not accompany the wrestling in the way zurnas do in Balkan oiled wrestling,[49] they are constantly in the background as the pipe bands compete with each other. Wrestlers have often said that the sound 'pumped them up' and 'got them in a martial mood'. The combination of distinctly Scottish events seems to create a special atmosphere and a feeling of being 'within' a culture, especially if – as at the Ceres Highland Games in Cupar, Fife – the events themselves have some historical connection.[50] Perhaps because there were fewer obvious 'cultural' symbols (such as pipes or dancers), I experienced less of this feeling at northern English events. A Cumbrian/Northumbrian wrestler might disagree.

For Scottish wrestlers, competing in the north of England might involve a long drive; the same was true for English wrestlers travelling to compete in Highland games and indoor competitions north of the border. To facilitate the participation of Glasgow wrestlers, many of them juniors, William Baxter borrowed a minibus; wrestlers with cars made their own way. Baxter observed that distances could be problematic: for Michael Phillips and his young Dundee-based wrestlers, the round trip could be as much as 400 miles (644km). Travelling to England for a competition, especially one where match outcomes were judged on single falls, might not appeal to Scottish wrestlers.[51]

Since I first became involved with the sport, the number of Scottish wrestlers visiting English events has fallen, possibly because both Baxter and Phillips eventually ceased to arrange transport. But as Heather Neilson of the Scottish Wrestling Bond recently explained, another contributing factor was possibly that 'the English season continues into September when the Scottish season ends in August. So successful wrestlers have often picked up injuries or would like to take a break…which often leads to them also not attending English events'. Finally, she noted that with Scotland now supporting more domestic competitions (including over ten at Highland games), wrestlers feel less need to head south. While some still do, she says that 'it's more of a personal endeavour rather than someone running a bus'. [52]

Wrestling and National Identity

Jeremy MacClancy and others have pointed out how sport can function as a tool of cultural and national expression, not least because certain forms of competition enable members of smaller groups or nations to excel against those from bigger nations.[53] Combat sports are no exception. In his book examining wrestling culture in north India, Joseph Alter relates how the renowned Indian wrestler Ghulam Mohammad Baksh Butt, known as 'The Great Gama', toured the world (including colonial Britain) in the early twentieth century, defeating all comers and proving the superiority of Indian wrestlers.[54]

In some cases, the regional aspect of a sport may also highlight the uniqueness of a regional or ethnic culture. Alter also explores the complex relationship between Muslim and Hindu identity, and

[49] Hill, 'Wrestling with Identities', 114.

[50] The Ceres Highland Games, the oldest free games in Scotland, were established by Robert the Bruce following the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 (http://www.ceresgames.co.uk/).

[51] Baxter, 'Refereeosis', 6.

[52] Heather Neilson, Facebook Messenger to author, 19 June 2024.

[53] Jeremy MacClancy, ed., *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity* (Hendon, VA: Berg Publishers, 1996), 1–20.

[54] Alter, 'The Wrestler's Body', 64–5.

how wrestling supports expressions of Indian and Pakistani nationalism.[55] Similarly, both oiled wrestling in North Macedonia and *gouren* in Brittany are strongly aligned with specific cultures.[56] In *Fighting Scholars: Habitus and Ethnographies of Martial Arts and Combat Sports*, a 2014 book edited by Raúl Sánchez García and Dale C. Spencer, twelve essays explore this subject in the context of different combat sports.[57]

Nardini and Épron's research on Breton *gouren* wrestling demonstrates how some aspects regarded as unique to a sport go beyond the fine points of technique to questions of cultural identity. Both a sport and a Breton tradition, *gouren* is regarded as an expression of 'being' Breton, and wrestlers' pride in their sport thus expresses their regional identity.[58] Several of the authors' points provide a useful lens for examining C/W wrestling and Scottish Backhold. Like *gouren*, a style adopted by many British wrestlers at IFCW events, both C/W and Backhold wrestlers see their sport as marginalised in competition with more powerful national cultures and more widely-practiced international styles.

In the face of such power differentials, both C/W and Scottish Backhold wrestling have staked out the uniqueness of their traditions by means of various cultural and identity markers. In international competition, for example, flags are always heavily symbolic. Scottish Backhold wrestlers parade as a national team under the Saltire, expressing pride in what they see as their sport's national identity. For C/W wrestlers, the situation is more nuanced. At the 1999 IFCW tournament, the C/W team wrestled under the Cross of St George, but declared the team as 'Cumbria' (despite the presence of some Northumbrian wrestlers).[59] This was said to be a practice remaining from when Cornish wrestlers, who wrestle in a jacket style, participated in IFCW. Roger Robson maintained that the label 'Cumbria' was meant to differentiate the style of wrestling rather than a sense of regional rivalry; now that Cornwall's connection with the IFCW has lapsed, the C/W team call themselves 'England' in international meetings.[60]

While Cumbria is not itself a 'nation' in the sense that Scotland is, Mike Huggins' research has shown how C/W wrestling and other Lakeland sports have functioned as identity markers for Cumbrians.[61] Cumbrian wrestlers often cite the fact that William Litt's *Wrestliana* was the first history of wrestling in England. They note C/W's participation in the nineteenth-century National Olympics, and they are proud of its antique trophies, which are still in use. They boast of C/W's historic connection with Grasmere Sports, arguably the most important event in the C/W calendar, reflective of the rural agricultural tradition of the region, and one in which wrestling has featured since the event was first held in 1850.[62] Perhaps more important, many C/W wrestlers can trace a family lineage connected to the sport, something fewer of the Scottish wrestlers seem able to claim. For such reasons, a C/W wrestler may be seen as both an embodiment of the sport and an exemplar of Cumbrian culture and identity.

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[55] Alter, 'The Wrestler's Body', 225–227.

[56] Hill, 'Wrestling with Identities', 107–112; Nardini and Épron, 'Being Breton', 4–6.

[57] Sánchez García, Raúl and Dale C. Spencer, eds, *Fighting Scholars: Habitus and Ethnographies of Martial Arts and Combat Sports* (New York: Anthem Press, 2014).

[58] Nardini and Épron, 'Being Breton', 5.

[59] When I asked a handful of Northumbrians about having to wrestle as 'Cumbrians' in the years 1998–2002, the answer was usually a raised eyebrow and a wry smile but little elaboration.

[60] Roger Robson, CWWA report for 1 February 2018 (https://www.cwwa.org.uk/archive/2/2018-reports.pdf/). Mike Tripp reports that Cornwall's involvement with IFCW was in the mid-1980s, and while some wrestlers took part in international events, no Cornish association was a member; see', 'Cornish Wrestling', 140–141.

[61] Mike Huggins, 'Sport helps make us what we are', 81–96.

[62] Arguably the most important event in the C/W calendar, wrestling has been a fixture since the event began in 1850.

The history of Scottish Backhold may be less well documented, but its long association with events which are deliberately expressive of a Scottish (Highland/rural) culture carries considerable symbolic weight. Sharing a context that involves displays of Scottish dancing, pipe bands, Scottish music and various heavy sports, Scottish Backhold is seen as a part of this culture, and its kilt-wearing practitioners as visually performing the culture. While the wearing of the kilt in competition is likely a fairly recent innovation, it has become emblematic of the sport's Scottish identity, and many Scottish Backhold wrestlers who participated in my research valued their sport as an expression of that identity.[63] Although more than half of questionnaire respondents had experience of other styles, especially Judo, all reported that the 'Scottishness' of Backhold was important to them. The feelings of one wrestler were echoed by others: [64]

> It allows you to feel proud of your heritage, the idea that wrestling has been around for centuries and was used on battlefields, as well as this, the historical sites of the Highland Games lets you appreciate it.

Even non-Scots valued cultural symbolism of the sport. A Bulgarian member of one club commented, 'I am not a Scottish but yes, thanks to Backhold Wrestling I feel more Scottish than ever. Love it!'.[65] My own experience, as someone raised in England in an English/Scottish family, has been similar, as I felt an enhanced sense of Scotland as part of my own identity when I participated in the sport.

The historic rivalry between Scotland and England has undoubtedly encouraged wrestlers on both sides of the border to perform their best, especially in cross-border competitions. Champion Backhold wrestler Robert Clark told me about the time he once wrestled the local lord at Redesdale in Northumberland: 'His ancestor claimed to have hanged more Scots than anyone else… I took great pleasure in beating him!'[66] In his article for *Inside Hype,* William Baxter invoked the Border Reivers' centuries-long tradition of cross-border cattle-raiding to reinforce his boast about the superiority of Scottish training methods: 'Your men are no bigger than ours, the Border Reivers saw to that centuries ago.'[67]

While several authors have noted elements of anti-Englishness in some areas of Scottish sport, this was not something that I encountered among wrestlers during either my research or my active participation in Backhold.[68] Whilst many wrestlers were in favour of Scottish independence, I never heard any Scottish wrestler do more than complain about sporting politics, or express exasperation at Cumbrian refereeing. As an Englishman, my presence might stimulate a bit of banter – such as when I was once advised to use my English accent to my advantage by greeting a Cumbrian wrestler on the

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[63] While wrestling is undoubtedly an ancient sport in Scotland, the wearing of the kilt and other forms of tartan clothing was banned (apart from military wear) in Highland areas between 1746 and 1782. Lowland and Borders areas historically had never worn such clothing. The adoption of kilts by Scottish Backhold wrestlers is likely to have come about during the revival of Highland dress during the nineteenth century, when tartan first became symbolic of 'Scottishness' during the Romantic movement; see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_kilt. Webster and Dinnie note that 'there was a lengthy period in late Victorian and Edwardian times when kilts were optional' for competitors in heavy events at Highland games; but Scottish strongman and wrestler Donald Dinnie wore a kilt in at least one wrestling bout late in his career; see Webster and Dinnie, *Donald Dinnie*, 93 and 111.

[64] Questionnaire respondent, 7 June 2014.

[65] Questionnaire respondent, 7 July 2014.

[66] Personal Communication, August 15, 1998.

[67]Baxter, 'Refereeosis', 7. I asked Baxter if he was suggesting that the Scottish raiders had fathered children south of the border. He chuckled, saying 'You're the only one who seems to have got that.'

[68] Grant Jarvie and Irene A. Reid, 'Scottish Sport, Nationalist Politics and Culture', *Culture, Sport and Society* 2/2 (1999), 22–43; Stuart Whigham, '"Anyone but England"? Exploring anti-English sentiment as part of Scottish national identity in sport', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 49/2 (April 2012), 152–174.

mat: 'Seeing your kilt and hearing your English accent will confuse him long enough for you to get the fall!'

In contrast, William Baxter's article mentioned occasions where he heard anti-Scottish sentiments expressed in Cumbria, although these appear to have been rare.[69] Many C/W events were only too pleased to have Scottish wrestlers attend, as they boosted the number of competitors. At one village fête in Northumbria, the local people were grateful for our attendance, because otherwise there would not have been much wrestling. It also helped that the winning Scots afterwards bought all the prize vegetables from the village show with their prize-money.

One source of tension which was apparent throughout my research had to do with the system of selecting wrestlers for bouts. SWB uses a pool system that allows wrestlers to compete against several opponents in their pool, with the two top wrestlers going through to the next round. The Cumbrian system, on the other hand, only allows one winner to progress, so that wrestlers who lose a single match are out of the competition. As noted earlier, Scottish wrestlers often felt that travelling long distances for one bout was not worth the trouble. Some also suspected that English events deliberately matched Scottish wrestlers against each other in the early rounds so as to reduce the number of Scottish competitors going through to the later rounds.

Scottish wrestlers maintained high regard for their counterparts (Bretons, Sardinians, Icelanders and others) in international competitions, in which many Scots excelled. International competitions were recognized as friendly and well organised, but because they often had much larger pools of wrestlers than Scotland and Cumbria, success in these tournaments was considered something special. Rival wrestlers respected one another as wrestlers, and I recall no instances of wrestlers being abused for their nationality.

Dress and its problems

We have already mentioned the differences between Scottish Backhold and C/W wrestling as regards competition attire. Whereas the style of dress can be functionally important in other forms of wrestling – in Cornish Wrestling and *gouren*, for example, items of clothing are fundamental to the wrestling technique itself – this is not the case in C/W and Backhold, where the clothing serves only as a visual marker of the relevant regional traditions and cultures.

As noted, many Scottish wrestlers compete in kilts. While these are not compulsory, most wrestlers have felt that the kilt was an important part of the tradition. One problem, however, has been that kilts are generally expensive, and few wrestlers would wish to risk damaging or staining a new one in competition. For that reason many wrestlers, particularly younger ones, sought out second-hand or army surplus kilts, the latter being heavier and tougher.[70] Despite the popular notion that a 'true Scotsman' wears nothing under the kilt, few wrestlers would go that far.[71] Sporting bodies insist on

[69] Baxter, 'Refereeosis', 7.

[70] For details about the modern kilt, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kilt#Measurements.

[71] Matthew Smith, 'What does a Scotsman wear under his kilt?', 9 October 2016. https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/10/09/what-does-scotsman-wear-under-his-kilt.

the wearing of underwear, and as one wrestler commented when questioned by a European TV interviewer, 'You don't want to find yourself upside down and everything hanging out!'[72]

Fig. 4 The low edge of the kilt.

The kilt does, however, sometimes pose problems for Cumbrian match officials. Most commonly, a Cumbrian referee might judge a fall incorrectly when the bottom of the kilt touches the ground before either wrestler, causing Scottish referees to observe that the official was 'watching the kilt, not the man!' (*Fig. 4*). A second complaint is that the metal buckles on the side of the kilt might snag an opponent's clothes or even cause injury. To this, the Scots argue that the thick leather belt worn with the kilt covers the buckles and protects the wrestlers. A third problem with the kilt is its weight, given that participants in Cumbrian bouts are expected to weigh-in wearing the attire in which they will wrestle. Because the kilt can weigh several pounds, Scottish wrestlers usually weigh-in without it; but doing so may contravene C/W rules, as Baxter himself admitted.[73] Finally, some have felt that the added weight of the kilt disadvantages the wearer's opponent. A leading Cumbrian wrestler suggested that Scots should wear something similar to the Cumbrian attire, with perhaps a strip of tartan on the trunks of their leggings. There were wry smiles in reply!

Fig. 5 Turned out for inspection, Grasmere Sports, 2022. (Photo: CWWA Facebook post)

The Cumbrian attire, introduced in the nineteenth century to make the sport appear more respectable, comprises a pair of leggings or tights (usually long-johns), a singlet, socks, and a pair of trunks or shorts, often finely embroidered. Before many tournaments there is often a competition for the best-dressed wrestler (*Fig. 5*).[74] But because, as in Scottish competitions, there is a tradition that a wrestler may emerge from the crowd of onlookers, rules about traditional attire tend to be strictly enforced only at certain championships. Despite its historic adherence to standards of dress, several members of the CWWA suggested in 2005 that the tradition be relaxed to encourage more young people to get involved, to avoid their

[72] Personal communication, June 2002.

[73] Baxter, 'Refereeosis', 5. He also claimed that some venues had banned the kilt, allegedly at sponsors' request.

[74] The trunks in particular have been known to inspire 'Superman' references from journalists.

having to wear the 'old-fashioned' attire; predictably, this suggestion met with disapproval from traditionalists[75]. Whilst many young wrestlers still wear the traditional attire with enthusiasm, it was agreed that tracksuit bottoms or shorts might eventually suffice.[76] According to the 2018 constitution, traditional attire has now become compulsory only for senior championships (male and female), and junior wrestlers are not required to wear it at all.[77] It will be interesting to see whether relaxing the rules around dress will have had any effect on recruitment of new wrestlers in the future.

Fig. 6 Connie Hodgson, first Ladies All-Weights World Champion, Ambleside, 2016. (Photo: CWWA, by permission)

Female Wrestlers

Tradition is important to those who practice heritage sports like those we have been examining here, and potential threats to traditional practices are taken seriously, as we noted in the resistance of some CWWA committee members to cooperation with SWB. With the increasing pace of social change in recent years, traditional sports have often found themselves challenged to adapt (or not). Wrestling is no different.

One of the most significant challenges has been the idea of female participation. Nardini and Épron note how the traditionally male sport of *gouren* in Brittany has dealt with the increasing involvement of women, both as wrestlers and as administrators.[78] Similarly, in the past twenty years both C/W and Scottish Backhold have seen more women and girls competing, particularly since the Covid lockdown period (2020–2021). This rise may be part of an increased interest in women's wrestling since the inclusion of female Freestyle in the 2004 Olympics, as well as a wider expansion of female combat sports worldwide.[79]

In response, both CWWA and SWB have introduced weight categories and championship competitions specifically for women (*Fig. 6)*. Nowadays, women compete far more regularly, as Linda Scott, Vice-President of CWWA, explained:

> Even though the number of girls wrestling in the academies throughout the winter were slowly increasing before the millennium, there were only certain events which held classes for females. Concerns were voiced by female wrestlers, the CWWA Governing Board listened, and year by year more events began adding classes for females. Looking back at the Grasmere entries book, classes for females were not introduced until 2003.[80]

Family heritage remains important, too: the vice-president of CWWA and the treasurer of SWB, both women, told me that many new participants, particularly younger girls, are often daughters of wrestlers (*Fig. 7*).

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[75] Renwick, Jamie, (2005), '"Embarrassed" wrestlers drop embroidered pants to save sport from dying', *The Independent*, 13 April 2005. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/embarrassed-wrestlers-drop-embroidered-pants-to-save-sport-from-dying-486252.html

[76] Roger Robson, 'Wanting the Gear to Make Them Look Cool Kids', Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling Association, 8 April 2005. http://www.cumberland-westmorland-wrestling-association.com/2005-Articles/NEWS-11-April-8th-2005.html.

[77] Thanks to Linda Scott of CWWA for sharing these regulations.

[78] Nardini and Épron, 'Being Breton', 8–12.

[79] Marc Levy, 'Girls are falling in love with wrestling, the nation's fastest-growing high school sport', *AP News*, last modified 12 March 2024. https://apnews.com/article/wrestling-girls-high-school-c1e18531cf36831e158282ea08ca9775

[80] Linda Scott, Facebook Messenger, 19 June 2024.

Just as they were for the male wrestlers, however, the CWWA's regulations have sometimes been a source of frustration for Scottish women hoping to compete south of the border. While CWWA allows mixed-sex matches between children under twelve, adult matches are single-sex only. Therefore, any Scottish female hoping to participate in a Cumbrian event might think twice, as she would be unsure of having any opportunity to wrestle. Heather Neilson, SWB treasurer and competing wrestler, explained:

> When I bring up this topic to other wrestlers, the common response I receive is sometimes it is not worth the journey down to England to compete if you only get about one or two wrestles. You could take the three- to four- hour trip for a wrestle that lasts thirty seconds! Wasn't often worth it when we had great wrestling here in Scotland that was on your doorstep.[81]

Fig. 7 Roger Robson with his grand-daughter Gemma, winner of Ladies Open, Grasmere Sports, 2019. (Photo: CWWA, by permission)

As Neilson's comment indicates, part of the reason fewer wrestlers of both genders are willing to travel to compete in England is that there are more opportunities for participation in Scotland – around ten events per season – including an increasing number for women. Although SWB had previously allowed both female-only and mixed-sex matches, there were no exclusively female categories until both SWB and CWWA began to introduce them in the early-to-mid 1990s. Championship tournaments followed, with the CWWA's Ladies World Championship at the prestigious Grasmere Sports in 2016, and the first Scottish Championship held at Ceres Highland Games in 2006 (*Fig. 8*).

Fig. 8 Gary Neilson; Katie Horne, 10st 7lbs Scottish Champion; William Baxter, Ceres Highland Games, 2019. (Photo: Richard Findlay, FofoFling Scotland, by permission)

The visibility of women's Backhold wrestling was further heightened when the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) commissioned a new play, *Thrown*, about a group of novice female wrestlers, the character of the coach being based on Heather Neilson herself. The show premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival and toured Scotland. The idea for the production stemmed from a conversation between Neilson, a professional camera operator, and a choreographer at the NTS:

> I was chatting to a choreographer about wrestling and a couple of weeks later we met up as she was interested to know more. She enjoyed the fact I was a minority within a minority sport and how females fit within the wrestling dynamic! I then heard in January 2023 that she had her play commissioned and she brought me on board to make sure all the wrestling techniques… were correct!

She explained that playwright Nat McCleary was interested in using wrestling as a tool to explore a number of issues, not just sport:

[81] Heather Neilson, Facebook Messenger, 19 June 2024.

> Basically she was inspired about my situation as a female wrestler but not of the WWE fame. Excellent promo for the sport and I have seen the show a few times and it's incredible. Covers a lot of issues and topics for women and Scottish identity also![82]

While some reviews criticised the script, the subject matter was received with great enthusiasm.[83] Because the play was performed by such a prestigious company, the production would appear to be – as Neilson says – 'Excellent promo for the sport'.

Conclusion

This article has sought to examine the sport of Scottish Backhold wrestling, and to trace its relationship with Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling over the past quarter century. While many different traditional wrestling styles exist, the similarity between these two backhold styles strongly suggests a shared heritage in the borderlands between Scotland and England, and the two groups' long history of competing in each other's events would seem to acknowledge that common background. Recent developments over the research period have, however, raised areas of tension between them regarding practical matters – rules and regulations, organisation of tournaments, length of season, matters of dress, refereeing, and the participation of women – as well as questions of national and regional identity.

Since I began my fieldwork, Scottish Backhold has seen increased participation, and – assuming ongoing council funding for Highland games – a growing roster of tournaments (currently ten) throughout Scotland. CWWA stages over fifty events, from village fêtes to large agricultural shows, over a longer season. Scottish Backhold has gained greater sophistication in forging business relationships and winning sponsorships, and has begun to see the emergence of generational lineages as older wrestlers introduce their children to the sport – something that has long been the case with several well-known Cumbrian 'dynasties'. Heather Neilson believes both organisations have profited from each other's example:

> I think the relationship between England and Scotland subconsciously helps each organization to level up and progress. Certainly within the concept of female competitions. We often look over the border and see what they've achieved and look at our own personal situation and see how we can match it and make it better.[84]

Even so, the long tradition of cross-border competition has undoubtedly declined as the increased number of events in Scotland, and the improving quality of Scottish wrestling, mean that Scottish competitors no longer need to travel to C/W tournaments to test themselves. While a small number of Scots do make the journey, the days of busloads of young wrestlers travelling across the border from Glasgow and Dundee are long gone. It remains to be seen if the rise of female competition in Cumbria might stimulate renewed cross-border rivalry.

In a period increasingly characterised by identity politics, it will also be interesting to see whether matters relating to national and regional identity will strengthen the healthy rivalry between these two backhold traditions, or exacerbate the differences between them. Just as the Scottish Independence referendum reinforced the Scottish identity of many citizens north of the border, has the 'Scottishness' of Scottish Backhold swelled the ranks of new practitioners? Do wrestlers from outside Scotland – like the Bulgarian questionnaire respondent mentioned earlier – experience a sense of Scottish identity through participation in the sport? How have developments in Scottish Backhold affected wrestling practices amongst Scottish diasporas? In Cumbria, given that the Cumbrian team wrestle

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[82] Heather Neilson, Facebook Messenger, 8 July 2023.

[83] Mark Harding, review of 'Thrown', *Broadway Baby*, 6 August 2023; Roy Docherty, 'Thrown Theatre Review: Wrestling and Identity Piece', *The List*, 17 August 2023; David Jays, 'Thrown review – backhold wrestling tale tackles Scottish identity,” *The Guardian*, Tuesday, 8 August 2023.

[84] Heather Neilson, Facebook Messenger 8 July 2024.

as 'England' in international competitions, do non-Cumbrian exponents of C/W wrestling feel greater affinity to Cumbria or to England? Wrestlers' views and feelings about these matters deserve further scrutiny.

Although the issues aired by William Baxter and Roger Robson in the pages of *Inside Hype* revolved around administrative matters, the two men enjoyed a cordial relationship. Baxter acknowledged that Scottish Backhold owed a great deal to its English counterpart, and invited noted C/W wrestlers, including Robson, to lead workshops and seminars in Scotland. He also praised the organisation of major events like the Grasmere Sports and the 1999 ICWF championships. In response, Roger Robson extolled the skills of Scottish Wrestlers like Robert McNamara and Robert Clark. Leading figures in the CWWA praised the work of Baxter and of Michael Philips in promoting wrestling, especially their work with disadvantaged urban youth. Most important, wrestlers in both organisations genuinely respected one another and enjoyed competing in each other's tournaments.

While social pressures, emerging cultural issues and questions of regional and national identity may have an impact on these two wrestling traditions in coming years, we may hope that the intense but respectful rivalry which has so far characterised the relationship between Scottish Backhold and Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling will continue to generate fierce competition, as well as warm friendships, on both sides of the Tweed.

Dedication and Acknowledgements

This essay is dedicated to the memory of my coach and friend William Baxter (1935–2023) and to Roger Robson (1942–2021), competitor, journalist, and longtime member of the CWWA governing board, both of whom generously shared valuable advice and insights during my research; also to the memory of Mike Tripp (d. 2024), who helpfully commented on a draft of this article. Finally, it is also offered to the memory of Robert 'Big Rab' MacNamara (d. 2019), multiple C/W wrestling world champion and Scottish Backhold champion.

My warmest thanks to Linda Scott, Vice-president of CWWA, who patiently answered my queries and supplied me with scans of *Inside Hype*, and to her colleagues at CWWA; to Robert Clark, Frazer Hirsch, Heather Neilson, and Michael Phillips; and finally, to all those wrestlers who inspired or contributed to my interest in this topic. The title, 'Both Sides of the Tweed' is quoted from a song by the Scottish folksinger Dick Gaughan.

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Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric: An Eye-Witness Account of Evictions in 1840s Argyll

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Abstract
This article considers two songs by a previously unrecognised Gaelic poet, Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir (Catherine Fletcher), both composed in the period 1839−40 and preserved in the late nineteenth-early twentieth century press. The first is an elegy to the young heir of Innistrinich; the second, which is the main focus of the article, is a lament occasioned by the eviction of tenants on the Barbreck, Lochaweside, estate of Alexander Campbell of Monzie *c*. 1840. The lament captures a specific moment in time very shortly after the tenants had received notice of their eviction but before the evictions had taken place, and conveys something of the lived experience of this township at this moment of crisis. The article considers how the poet draws on panegyric motifs to praise this flourishing community − rather than to praise individuals – and considers how she expresses her distress, anger, and acceptance, placing her responses within the wider context of the traditional role of women as keeners in Gaelic-speaking society.

The principal subject of this essay is a song, previously unrecognised by Gaelic literary scholarship, which offers a unique and striking perspective on the eviction of tenants in mid-nineteenth-century Argyll. The song captures, in a very specific and immediate way, the physical and emotional effects of the unexpected news that tenants in Barbreck, Lochaweside, were to be evicted *c*. 1840, and depicts the loss of what is shown in the song to be a self-sustaining and vibrant township. Composed by Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir (Catherine Fletcher), who witnessed the eviction of her friends and neighbours first-hand, it was published for the first time in 1890, some fifty years after its composition. It owed its survival to a man, still living in this community at the time of his death in 1890, who would have been around thirty years of age when the evictions took place, his retention of the song speaking to its continued importance as a memorial to this pre-Clearance township. In addition, the article considers a further song by Nic an Fhlèisdeir from around the same time which offers further insights into the life and compositions of this previously unknown female poet. These poems afford a rare view from within a Gaelic-speaking community at the very point of its being dismantled, and allow us to examine how the poet conveys her – and by extension, given the public role of Gaelic poets, the community's – reaction to this disastrous turn of events.

Scottish Gaelic songs and poetry of the Clearances tended, until relatively recently, to be viewed somewhat unfavourably. Critics such as William J. Watson and Sorley MacLean found much of the corpus lacking by comparison with the literature of the preceding century.[1] This dismissal was echoed by, and doubtless helped to reinforce, the general disposition of Highland historians to overlook Gaelic sources for the period, succumbing to the belief that, as Eric Richards put it, these were 'slight and not easily interpreted'.[2] A turning point came, however, with the publication in 1995 of Donald E. Meek's *Tuath is Tighearna. Tenants and Landlords*, a collection of Gaelic verse from the late eighteenth-century through to the late nineteenth century which revealed a rich seam of verse on

[1] William J. Watson, *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig: Specimens of Gaelic Poetry 1550−1900* (Inverness: An Comunn Gaidhealach, 1918), xxxi; Samuel MacLean, 'The poetry of the Clearances', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 38 (1937−41): 293−324.
[2] Eric Richards, *A History of the Highland Clearances Volume 2: Emigration, Protest, Reasons* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 289.

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clearance and land agitation.[3] Similarly, Meek's later anthology of nineteenth-century Gaelic verse, *The Wiles of the World. Caran an t-Saoghail*, counters some of the negative perceptions of song and poetry from this period.[4] Significantly, Meek obtained much of the material for *Tuath is Tighearna* from the pages of nineteenth-century newspapers, and it is to the press that both songs to be considered here owe their survival.

The later nineteenth-century Highland press is an invaluable and vastly under-explored resource for Gaelic literature, despite Gaelic appearing regularly from the 1870s in a number of publications, most importantly the *Highlander*, the *Oban Times*, the *Northern Chronicle*, the *Oban Telegraph* and the *Scottish Highlander*.[5] Most of this material consisted of songs and poetry, forms which Kirstie Blair's research has shown were prominent in the Scottish press more generally at the time.[6] Highland newspapers offered Gaelic poets a valuable opportunity to share their work with readers throughout the Highlands as well as in the Lowlands and overseas. Many of the best-known Gaelic literary figures of the later nineteenth century came to prominence through the publication of their work in these newspapers, among them the two most recognisable female voices of the century, Màiri Mhòr nan Òran ('Big Mary of the Songs', Mary MacPherson, 1821−1898) and Màiri NicEalair (Mary MacKellar, 1834−1890).[7] Similarly, we find voices from earlier periods introduced to a late nineteenth-century readership, reflecting the contemporary *zeitgeist* of preserving what remained of older Gaelic traditions in the face of encroaching anglicisation.

Two such interesting survivals, both published in the *Oban Times*, were the work of the same poet, Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir. Both were composed within a year or two of one another. The first song chronologically was, in fact, the second to appear. Entitled *Marbhrann do Thormaid Og Mhic-'Ic-Alastair, Innis-Droighnich* ('An Elegy to Young Norman MacAlister, Innistrinich'), it appeared in August 1900 in the *Oban Times,* where it was attributed to '*Bean 'Ic-an-Fhleisdeir, a bha aig am a bhais anns a' Bharrabhreac*' ('Mrs Fletcher, who was at the time of his death in Barbreck').[8] Although a contributor's name is often provided when this is not the same as that of the composer, in this case no contributor's name – either real name or pseudonym – is given. The twelve-year old heir to Innistrinich, Keith Norman MacAlister, died in November 1839, and it can be safely assumed that this elegy was composed soon afterwards, given the poet's reference to '*Bho cheann còrr agus*

[3] Donald E. Meek, ed., *Tuath is Tighearna. Tenants and Landlords* (Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1995).

[4] Donald E. Meek, ed., *The Wiles of the World. Caran an t-Saoghail. Anthology of 19th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2003), xiii−xxxviii. For further discussion of the development of scholarly approaches to Gaelic poetry of the Clearances see Martin MacGregor, 'The Highland Clearances: A reassessment' (forthcoming).

[5] Sheila M. Kidd, 'The Scottish Gaelic Press', in *The Edinburgh History of the British and Irish Press, Vol. 2: Expansion and Evolution 1800−1900*, ed. David Finkelstein (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 353−54.

[6] Kirstie Blair, *Working Verse in Victorian Scotland. Poetry, Press and Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019); Kirstie Blair, ed., *Poets of the People's Journal. Newspaper Poetry in Victorian Scotland* (Glasgow: The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2016).

[7] Dòmhnall Eachann Meek, ed., *Màiri Mhòr nan Òran. Taghadh de a h-Òrain* (Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1998); Priscilla Scott, '"Bean-Chomuinn nam bàrd": Exploring common ground in the lives and perspectives of the Gaelic poets Mary MacPherson and Mary MacKellar', in *Cànan & Cultar / Language & Culture. Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 8*, ed. Wilson McLeod, Anja Gunderloch and Rob Dunbar (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2016), 71−84.

[8] Bean 'Ic-an-Fhleisdeir, 'Marbhrann do Thormaid Og Mhic-'Ic-Alastair, Innis-Droighnich', *Oban Times*, 18 August, 1900, 7. The Gaelic orthography in both songs discussed in this article appears as it was printed in the *Oban Times*.

seachduin / Thàinig teachdaire a' bhàis ort' ('A week and more ago / Death's messenger came upon you').[9]

The second song – although it was the first to appear in the *Oban Times* – was seemingly composed a year or so after the *Marbhrann*. This was *Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric, Taobh Loch-Atha* ('A Lament for the People of Barbreck, Lochaweside'), whose composer was named as '*Catriona nic Lachlann, Bean Araidh anns a' Bhaile Cheudna, 1840*' ('Catherine MacLachlan, a woman in the same township, 1840').[10] That these were one and the same woman is confirmed by Malcolm MacFarlane (1853−1936), a prolific Gaelic writer and scholar who was born and raised in Dalavich, a short distance south of Barbreck, Loch Awe. It was MacFarlane who contributed the *Cumha* to the *Oban Times*; and although he mentions no other songs by the poet, he introduces her as 'Catherine MacLachlan, wife of John Fletcher, once a carrier between Kilchrenan and Oban'.[11]

Catherine and John Fletcher appear in the Census of 1841 as living in Barbreck, on the west side of Loch Awe, with two sons, Dugald (8) and John (2). John's age is given as forty-five, and he is described as an agricultural labourer; Catherine's age is given as forty, although it has not been possible to establish her date of birth with any certainty given a lack of corroborating evidence and the fact that her name was not uncommon in this period.[12] (It is worth noting that ages in the early censuses are often inaccurate, and that those of adults in the 1841 Census were generally rounded down to the nearest multiple of five.) The record of Catherine's marriage to John on 3 January 1825 reveals that she was from Oban.[13] As well as the two sons who appeared in the 1841 Census, they had at least three daughters, Christian, (born 1825), Mary (born 1827) and Margaret (born 1829).[14] Beyond this, little information is to be gleaned about the poet and her family.

Keith Norman MacAlister, the subject of the elegy, was the only son of Keith MacDonald MacAlister of Innistrinich and his wife Flora. Innistrinich, to the north-east of Barbreck on the other side of Loch Awe, was very much within the poet's geographical orbit. This elegy is not the only contemporary Gaelic composition directed towards the MacAlisters of Innistrinich. Dòmhnall Mac-an-Roich (Donald Munro, 1789−1867) dedicated his 1848 collection, *Orain Ghàidhealach,* to Keith MacDonald MacAlister, referencing '*meud do speis do na gaidheil, agus d'a 'n cleachdan*' ('how great your regard is for the Gaels and their customs'). This collection contains three songs to MacAlister, with one describing him as '*caraid nan gaidheal'* ('friend of the Gaels'), suggesting genuine esteem for this member of the landowning class in a period where the connection between the landed gentry and the tenantry had become more tenuous than in previous centuries, and often fraught when issues of land were concerned.[15] The fact that MacAlister was not landlord to Mac-an-

[9] He was born on 11 January 1827, Old Parish Records, Births 533/South Knapdale, 38. No record of his death has been found in Old Parish Records; his death was, however, announced in 'Died', *Caledonian Mercury*, 28 November 1839, 3.

[10] Catriona Nic Lachlann, 'Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric, Taobh Loch-Atha', *Oban Times*, 4 January, 1890, 3. See Appendix for the full text and translation of this song. For a recent overview, see Tòmas MacAilpein, 'Òran air Fuadach a' Bharrac Bhric (1840) [1890]', https://ceardach.blog/2024/06/04/oran-air-fuadach-a-bharra-bhric-1840-1890/.

[11] Nic Lachlann, 'Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric', 3.

[12] Census 1841 512/6/1, Parish of Inishail available at https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/

[13] Old Parish Records, Marriages, 512/ Glenorchy and Inishail 124, available at https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/

[14] Old Parish Records, Births. Fifteen-year-old Christian Fletcher is recorded in the 1841 Census as a lodger living in the neighbouring village, Coilleag, with Donald MacIntyre and his wife. Christian is most likely the Fletchers' older daughter. Census 1841 517/4/3.

[15] Domhnull Mac-an-Roich, *Orain Ghaidhealach* (Dun-Eidin: Clo-bhuailte airson an Ughdair, 1848), 38. For a discussion of this collection of poetry see Michel Byrne and Sheila M. Kidd, 'Vintners and criminal officers: Two nineteenth-century collections and their subscribers', in *Lìontan Lìonmhor: Local, National and Global Gaelic Networks from the 18th to the 20th Century*, ed. Michel Byrne and Sheila M. Kidd (Glasgow: Celtic and Gaelic, University of Glasgow, 2019), 85−107.

Roich nor indeed most likely, as is discussed briefly below, to Nic an Fhlèisdeir, presumably made for a less strained relationship and an appreciation of someone who was seen as a supporter of Gaels and their culture.

Nic an Fhlèisdeir's elegy is traditional in form, albeit limited to the types of praise which could be lavished upon a twelve-year old. It uses the tune of *Mo rùn geal òg* ('My fair young love'), the well-known elegy generally accepted to have been composed by Christina Ferguson to her husband, William Chisholm, who died at Culloden.[16] The young MacAlister's kindness is praised, in particular his kindness to the poor, a common feature of traditional panegyric:

Gu'm b'e t'iarrtas gach àm	It was your desire each time
A bhi deanamh ceann ris na bochdan	To be good to the poor
'S gun bhi cruaidh air a' bhantraich	And not to be harsh to the widow
A bha fann gun chùl-taice	Who was weak without support

Similarly, the poet praised the young man's horsemanship, his education, his wisdom and his future potential as a wise landlord: '*Bha do bhuaidhean a' gealltainn / Gu'm biodh thu'd Mhaighstir maith tuatha*' ('Your qualities promised / That you'd be a good master over tenantry').

One of the more striking and unusual verses is this one, which offers a view of his domestic role as a peace-keeper:

'S iomadh ceann a bh' air liathadh	Many a head turned grey
Nach robh co riaghailteach dòigh riut,	Wasn't as peaceable in their way as you,
'S e 'bhi deanamh na rèite	You were always keen
'Bha thu 'n déidh air 'an comhnuidh:	To be conciliatory:
Na'm biodh miothlachd air t'athair	If your father were displeased
'Nuair bhiodh am baile a òrdugh,	When the home was disorganised,
'S tric a dh'fhalbh thu 'n a choinneamh	You'd often go to meet him
A chumail moille air le d' chòmhradh:	To delay him with your chat:
Mo Rùn geal òg!	My fair young love!

The description of this very specific household scene suggests that the poet was intimately acquainted with the boy and his family, perhaps employed by them in a domestic role, such as that of a nurse, albeit no longer so by the time of his death. In the final verse, the poet mentions how the young heir used to visit her:

'S tric a thàinig thu 'm amharc	You'd often come to see me
'N àm dol do Dunéudainn:	When heading to Edinburgh:
'S nuair a thigeadh tu dhachaidh,	And when you'd come home
Bhiodh tu 'gabhail mo sgeula'	You'd be asking after me

While eighteenth-century poet Rob Donn (Robert Mackay, 1714–1778) acknowledged in his *Marbhrann do Iain Mac-Eachainn* ('Elegy to Iain MacEachann') that Gaelic elegies were often overly flattering, he nonetheless asserted: '*Cha do luaidh mu 'n duine-s' / Ach buaidh a chunnaic mo shùil air*' ('I didn't mention about this man / But qualities my own eye witnessed'). In the same way, Nic an Fhlèisdeir insists on the veracity of her praise:[17]

Faodaidh 'mhuinntir 'tha aineolach	Those who are ignorant
A bhi 'n an-fhios mu 'd ghnìomharan,	Being unfamiliar with your deeds
'S a bhi 'n teagamh mu'm rannan	May be doubtful about my verses
'Bhi air an ceangal le fìrinn;	Being based on truth;
Ach 's maith a thuigeas na h-eòlaich	But those familiar know well
Nach e sgleò 'chuir mi sìos ann,	That it's no lies I put in them

[16] For a discussion of this song and its melody see Anne Lorne Gillies, *Songs of Gaelic Scotland* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2005), 185–89.

[17] Robert Mackay, *Songs and Poems in the Gaelic Language* (Inverness: Kenneth Douglas, 1829), p. 321.

'S trian idir de 'd mhaitheas	And a third of your virtues
Cha rachadh agam air innseadh:	I was unable to tell:
Mo Rùn geal òg!	My fair young love!

The second and more interesting song by Nic an Fhlèisdeir is the twenty-two-verse *Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric* that was published almost exactly fifty years after its composition, a song which Malcolm MacFarlane introduces in terms of its continuing relevance in 1890: 'in these days when land reform is in the air and people inclined to recall incidents which tend to throw light upon the land administrators of the past, the following song cannot fail to be of interest'.[18] Following land agitation in the Highlands and Islands in the 1880s, the Napier Commission was established in 1883 to enquire into the conditions of the crofters; but even after the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act was passed in 1886, conflict over land rights remained a difficult issue. This ongoing tension was reflected in the establishment of a further commission, the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands) 1892, or the 'Deer Forest Commission' as it is commonly known.

MacFarlane explains that his source for the *Cumha* was 'old "Polinduich" (Duncan Sinclair)', and said that the poet had lived in the house where Sinclair now lived, although when she lived there is not clear. Polinduich, like Barbreck, was on the Inverawe estate. Duncan Sinclair died on 9 February 1890, just a month after the song he gave to MacFarlane was published in the *Oban Times*, with the entry for his death showing him as seventy-nine and confirming that he lived at Barbreck.[19] His age, and the fact that he was a native of the area, suggests that he most likely knew the poet and may have acquired the song directly from her; indeed, it may still have been a part of the area's oral tradition. What is not clear is whether MacFarlane transcribed the song from Sinclair singing it, or if Sinclair had it in manuscript form. MacFarlane reveals that the song 'was composed in 1840 and refers to the eviction by Campbell of Monzie of all the crofters on Barbreck for the purpose of letting it as one farm to Donald MacLulich (Domhnall laidir MacLulaich) [...] there were eighteen families in all, having 120 cows, for whom a herd was maintained by the crofters. After the evictions several of them became reduced to poverty'.[20]

The proprietor of Barbreck, which formed part of his Inverawe estate, was Alexander Cameron Campbell of Monzie, near Crieff in Perthshire (1811–1869). While evidence of the evictions which prompted the song have been hard to come by, Tòmas MacAilpein has uncovered a list of Barbreck crofters, dated to 1839, which was published in the *Oban Times* in 1932, almost a century later. The author of this article, writing under the pseudonym 'Agasha', had acquired the list from his father, who had been born in Barbreck in 1821. His list names some nineteen crofters, a figure which correlates closely with the 'eighteen families' mentioned by MacFarlane.[21]

It is hard to know how to square these pre-eviction figures with the higher figures recorded in the Census of 1841, although there is certainly evidence for a loss of population between 1841 and 1851. In 1841, twenty-six households and 136 individuals were recorded; by 1851 these figures were twenty-two and ninety-five respectively.[22] The fall in population is much more marked than that in households. Possibly the evictions had been announced before the Census date, but the actual removals carried out after it; on the other hand, the year given to MacFarlane may have been incorrect. Donald MacLullich, as well as being named by the poet as the individual being given the new lease, appears in the 1841 Census for Barbreck along with his family, two farm servants and two agricultural labourers, lending further support to the contextualising information given by Sinclair to MacFarlane.

[18] Nic Lachlann, 'Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric', 3.

[19] Statutory Deaths 517/1/3, available at https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/

[20] Nic Lachlann, 'Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric', 3.

[21] MacAilpein, 'Òran'; Agasha, 'Crofters at Barbreck, Lochaweside, 1839', *Oban Times* 1 October 1932, 3.

[22] Census 1841 512/6/1, Census 512/7/8, Parish of Inishail.

Potentially related to the evictions, Barbreck Farm was advertised to let in 1844, consisting 'of about 80 acres of superior arable ground, and 450 of excellent Grazings'.[23]

In a lecture on Gaelic song to the Paisley Liberal Club in November 1889, a few weeks before Nic an Fhlèisdeir's lament appeared in the *Oban Times*, MacFarlane prefaced an English translation of the poem with this somewhat dismissive comment:

> A large proportion of Gaelic songs seem to have sprung directly from the heart [...] there is not much evidence of intellectual afterthought about them. It could scarcely be otherwise, for most of the Gaelic songmakers could neither read nor write. It is not an uncommon case to find persons, on critical occasions, labouring under strong emotions, giving vent to their feelings in poetry once in their lives and never again. I received, the other day, a composition of this kind, which had not been previously published. It was composed by an old woman.[24]

MacFarlane's casual dismissal of the poet as a nameless 'old woman' belies the fact that he did in fact know her name, although perhaps he assumed her name was of little relevance to his Paisley audience. He was, however, clearly unaware of other compositions by Nic an Fhlèisdeir. His somewhat condescending view of many Gaelic songs takes little account of oral tradition or indeed of the relatively limited access to printing and publishing – even for literate Gaels – fifty years earlier when the song had been composed. In any case, his suggestion that this was a one-off composition at a moment of emotional crisis would seem to fall short of the mark. In addition to the fact that we have an earlier composition by this poet, it is hard to believe that this could have been Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir's first or even (as we now know) second song. The twenty-two verses have a coherence of structure and message, draw on a raft of conventions of traditional Gaelic praise poetry, and have an almost entirely consistent pattern of rhyme – both end rhyme and internal rhyme – throughout, clearly the skills of an adept and experienced poet. It should of course be noted that MacFarlane eventually became an active editor of Gaelic literature, so we cannot be sure how much of an editorial hand he had in the final published version; even so, as will become clear, the lament was clearly the output of an accomplished poet.[25]

The tune which Nic an Fhlèisdeir used, *An raoir a chunnaic mi 'm bruadar / A dh'fhàg luaineach mi 'm chadal* ('Last night I saw the dream / That left me unsettled in my sleep'), was borrowed from fellow Argyll poet Seumas Seadhach, Bàrd Loch nan Eala (James Shaw, the Lochnell Poet *c.* 1758–*c.* 1828). As Michael Newton has pointed out, Seadhach's late eighteenth-century song of social criticism includes denunciation of rack-renting landlords and evictions.[26] Given the subject of Nic an Fhlèisdeir's own song, her choice of tune is unlikely to be a coincidence, nor, presumably, would her local audience be unaware of the association.

In both of her extant compositions we see Nic an Fhlèisdeir in elegaic mode, thus occupying a traditional female space within Gaelic-speaking society. The role of women as keeners in Ireland and, to a lesser extent, in Scotland, is well-attested. Virginia Blankenhorn has described the keening ritual as 'a matrix for the reconstruction of a functioning community, transforming a chaotic event into something that could be comprehended and, in theory at least, laid to rest so that roles and relationships could be redefined and normality could reassert itself'.[27]

[23] 'Arable and Grazing Farm on Lochaweside, Argyllshire', *Glasgow Herald*, 5 February, 1844, 3.

[24] [Malcolm MacFarlane], 'Gaelic Song', *Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette*, 15 February, 1890, 3.

[25] Roderick MacLeod, 'Malcolm MacFarlane (1853−1931) of Dalavich and Elderslie: Writer, editor, composer, correspondent and controversialist', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 64 (2004−2006): 304−05.

[26] Michael Newton, 'The radical trickster of Mull: A poem by Seumas Seadhach, Bàrd Loch nan Eala', *Aiste* 5 (2019): 147.

[27] Virginia Blankenhorn, 'From ritual to rhetoric, from rhetoric to art: Women's poetry of lamentation in the Gaelic world', in Virginia Blankenhorn, *Tradition, Transmission, Transformation: Essays on Scottish Gaelic Poetry and Song* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), 296.

Because Nic an Fhlèisdeir's *Cumha* laments not an individual who has died, but rather a community of people and their way of life, the rhetoric of keening is adapted to reflect those circumstances. Her praise of the township reminds listeners of the praise heaped upon many a departed leader: it fed many mouths, it was hospitable and charitable, its individuals were industrious. But the rhetoric also references at least three of the stages of grief noted by Blankenhorn – anger, depression and acceptance – thus reinforcing the keening dimension as the poet seeks to share with others the process of coming to terms with the loss of their community.[28] Indeed, her own keening anticipates the involvement of others in the fifteenth verse, in the line '*Gu'm bi mnathan 's paisdean / 'S an deoir gu laidir a' sruthadh*' ('Women and children's tears / Will flow freely'). In its adaptation of keening rhetoric to address contemporary circumstances and societal need, Nic an Fhlèisdeir's *Cumha* supports Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart's suggestion that 'we might use keening to reassess the soundscape and behaviour patterns associated with the traumatic Age of Clearance'.[29]

The *Cumha* has an immediacy and level of detail about it which Gaelic poetry of the Clearances tends to lack, especially in its naming of individuals and its descriptions of specific circumstances and places. While the published title of the song may not have been the one originally given to it by its creator, the poet establishes the locale by mentioning specific place-names, such as '*mu'n Mhaolan riabhach 's Dun-Mhungain*' ('around the grey Maolan and Dun Mhungan'), '*cul na Druim-buidhe*' ('behind Druim Buidhe'), '*Dun-Caoch*', and Barbreck itself, along with the wider geographical setting encompassing Inverary and the River Awe.[30] While the song bears some comparison with *Oran do thuath an t-shlis mhin* ('Song to the tenantry of the smooth slope [i.e. north side of Loch Rannoch]') by an earlier poet, Mairearad Ghriogarach (Margaret MacGregor, *c*. 1750−1820), Nic an Fhlèisdeir's *Cumha* contains a much more extensive exposition of circumstances.[31] Where much of Mairearad Ghriogarach's response to evictions in Rannoch is an attempt to offer spiritual comfort, Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir, although drawing briefly on her faith, focuses on the immediate context and its effects on her community. Indeed, she offers something of 'the lived experience of the Clearances of ordinary men, women and children' which Annie Tindley has identified as being in short supply in sources for the Clearances.[32]

The opening stanza is traditional in its expression of deep distress. The news of evictions in Barbreck has left the poet with '*leann dubh air mo shuilean*' ('tears in my eyes'). At the same time, lines 3–4 seem to suggest that it was her neighbours who were being evicted, rather than herself and her family, as she specifically expresses grief '*mu na coimhearsnaich ghradhach / A ta laimh rium*

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[28] Blankenhorn, 'From ritual to rhetoric', 326−45.

[29] Dòmhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'Keening in the Scottish Gàidhealtachd', in *Death in Scotland. Chapters from the Twelfth Century to the Twenty-First*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Hilary J. Grainger (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), 146.

[30] Dun Mhungain may be Dùn Bhugan, immediately south of Barbreck, which appeared in both the Ordnance Survey Name Book (OS1/2/54/71) when the area was surveyed in 1871 (https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-54/72.), as well as on the map (https://maps.nls.uk/view-full/74427397#zoom=6&lat=5902&lon=11173&layers=BT), published in 1875. It may, however, refer to Dunvungan Castle which, according to a correspondent to the *Oban Telegraph* writing under the name 'Old Tar', 'stands on a little islet of Loch Awe', 22 October 1886, 3. Druim Buidhe, immediately to the north of Barbreck, and Dun na Cuaiche to the east, also appear on this map. While Am Maolan (Riabhach) does not appear to have been recorded, Ardreoch appears just south of Dun Bhugan in 1900 (https://maps.nls.uk/view/75483252).

[31] Michel Byrne, 'A window on the late eighteenth-century Scottish Highlands: The songs of Mairearad Ghriogarach', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 30 (2010): 51−52. For Mairearad Ghriogarach's songs see Donncha Mac in Toisich, *Co-chruinneach dh 'Orain Thaghte Ghaeleach, nach robh riamh roimh an clo-buala* (Edinburgh: John Elder, 1831).

[32] Annie Tindley, '"This will always be a problem in Highland history": A review of the historiography of the Highland Clearances', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 41, no 2 (2021): 184.

a' fuireach' ('for the dear neighbours / who live next to me').[33] Given that her husband is said by Duncan Sinclair to have been a letter carrier − though described in the 1841 Census as an agricultural labourer − it may be that her own family was not among those evicted, or that not everyone was evicted.

MacLean has noted that much of the surviving poetry of the Clearances is retrospective.[34] The fifth stanza of the *Cumha*, however – perhaps uniquely in Gaelic song – contains a very immediate depiction of how the eviction was announced:

Ach mar chloich as an athar	But like a bolt from the blue
Fhuair iad brath air a' chaochladh:	They heard otherwise:
Thainig teachdaireachd chabhaig	A speedy message came
Bho Ionar-Atha, le maor oirr'	From Inverary with a factor
Iad a chruinn 'chadh 'n a fhianuis,	To have them gather in his presence,
A chur a bhriathran an ceill doibh –	To explain matters to them –
Fhuair iad sgeul ri thoirt-dachaidh	They received news to take home
Nach robh taitneach ri eisdeachd.	That was not pleasant to hear.

Contrary to the common tendency of Gaelic poets to blame the factor, the English or the sheep, the poet conveys a strong sense of betrayal by the landlord, whom she specifically names in stanza 2:

Tha Mon-gheadh a' cur cùl ruinn;	Monzie is turning his back on us;
Rinn e burach na dunaidh	He has made a woeful mess
Air na daoine bha baigheil,	For the kind people
Anns an aite so fuireach.	Who live here.

Stanzas 6–7 return to this betrayal, in which the poet recalls an occasion where Monzie addressed those attending a local dinner. Her detailed description of the feast echoes similar descriptions in poetry of an older period, where the plentiful food provided in the chief's hall was a predictable theme in poetic panegyric. The implication in these verses is that Nic an Fhlèisdeir herself was present at this event:

'S e Mongheadh rinn ar mealladh	Monzie deceived us
Leis an aidmheil bu mhilse,	With the sweetest of declarations,
Aig ceann drochaid Atha	At the end of the Awe bridge
'N uair a ghabh sinn an dinneir –	When we took dinner –
Sheas e suas air an sgafal	He stood up on the platform
An coslas taitneach a' Chriosdaidh;	With the pleasant appearance of a Christian;
Ach 's ann an diugh rinn e dhearbhadh	But today he has proved
Gu 'm bu shearmoin gun bhrigh i.	That it was a sermon with no substance.

B' i siod a' chuirm a bha soghmhor;	That was the luxurious feast;
Bha muilt-roiste gun dith ann,	There was no lack of mutton,
Damh biadhte, slan fallain,	Well-fed venison, healthy and wholesome,
'S air a ghearradh 'n a mhiribh,	And cut into pieces,
Aran cruinneachd am pailteas,	Plenty wheat bread,
'S deoch chasgadh arn iota;	And drink to quench our thirst;
Ach 's daor rinn sinn a paigheadh	But dearly we paid for it,
'S e nis gar fagail 'n ar dibrich.	And he has made us outcasts.

Alexander Campbell had inherited the Inverawe Estate, along with the Perthshire estate of Monzie, in 1832 on the death of his father, General Alexander Campbell (*c.* 1750−1832). Like many other contemporary Highland estate owners, Campbell was an absentee landlord, as his father had

[33] MacFarlane provided a full English translation of the song in Nic Lachlann, *Cumha*, 3. The translations provided here are based on MacFarlane's but diverge from it in places.
[34] MacLean, 'The poetry of the Clearances', 314.

been before him; his obituary notes that he died at Markham House, Leamington, described as his 'usual residence', as it had also been his father's.[35] This obituary also describes him as 'one of the boldest and most daring riders with the Old Warwickshire Hounds', and mentions his 'taste for the fine arts'– all of which underlines his English, rather than Scottish, never-mind Highland credentials. He makes an appearance as a member of the Scottish gentry in Queen Victoria's diary, which records in September 1842 that he had been deer-stalking with Prince Albert and that after dinner he proved to be 'an exceedingly good dancer'.[36] None of this speaks to a landlord with a close connection to his Argyllshire tenantry.

Following in the footsteps of his father, who had been MP for Anstruther East Burghs (1797−1806) and then Stirling Burghs (1807−1818), the younger Campbell entered into politics and, following an unsuccessful attempt in 1837, was elected Conservative MP for Argyll in 1841. While the date of the dinner mentioned by the poet is not clear, it may have formed part of his electioneering campaign preceding the election of 1841. In the run-up to the 1837 election, the electors of Ardnamurchan, for example, were reported as hosting a dinner for him at Strontian, and it may be a similar event which is being described here.[37] Where his father had been interested in the military, in antiquarian matters and in Highland culture – he was a founding member of the Highland Society of Scotland in 1784 – his son's interests lay in church politics.[38] As a church elder, from 1838 Campbell of Monzie took an active, non-intrusionist stance in church politics; he became an elder in the Free Church when it came into being in 1843.[39] Given his high profile in contemporary ecclesiastical politics, Nic an Fhlèisdeir's reference to Campbell of Monzie's Christianity being an appearance rather than reality carries added resonance.

Traditional Gaelic praise poetry often addressed a clan chief's heir, encouraging him to follow the example of his father in his conduct. Where the heir's profligate reputation is already known – as in the case of the late seventeenth-century *Òran do Mhac Leòid Dhùn Bheagain* ('A Song to MacLeod of Dunvegan') by Roderick Morrison (*an Clàrsair Dall* ['The Blind Harper'] *c*. 1656–*c*. 1714) – the poet might criticise his behaviour.[40] In the *Cumha*, Nic an Fhlèisdeir starkly contrasts the younger Campbell's approach to his tenants with that of his father, whom she describes as having been highly esteemed for those qualities seen as important in a traditional chief, such as kindness and generosity of spirit. She pointedly observes that the father did not evict tenants without cause:

Na 'm bu mhac mar ant athair;	If only the son were like the father;
Bha e mathasach, faoilidh;	He was benevolent, hospitable;
Bha e iochdmhor r' a thuath-cheath'rn,	He was merciful to the tenantry,
'S cha d' rinn e gluasad gun aobhar;	He didn't remove them without reason;
Bha e iriosal, baigheil,	He was humble, kindly,
A deanamh fabhair ri daonie (sic)	Doing favours for people
'S gu 'n robh beannachd ant shloigh leis	And the blessing of the people was with him
A' dol fo 'n fhoid aig a' chaochladh.	Going to the grave at his death.

[35] 'Mr. Campbell of Monzie', *The Register and Magazine of Biography* (March, 1869): 207. For an obituary of General Alexander Campbell which offers detailed information about his military service see 'General A. Campbell', *The Gentleman's Magazine* (March, 1832): 273.

[36] Arthur Helps, ed., *Leaves from our Journal of Life in the Highlands from 1848 to 1861* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1868): 34−36.

[37] 'Dinner to Mr Campbell of Monzie', *Morning Post*, 1 November, 1836, 3.

[38] 'Appendix No. ii', *Prize Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society of Scotland* 1 (1799): lxxii. See also a discussion of General Alexander Campbell's collection of gold artefacts from Ireland in John Ó Néill, 'An Irish provenance for the Monzie Estate gold?', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 138 (2008): 7−1.

[39] Martin Spychal, 'The Disruption, Parliament and Conservative division: Alexander Campbell (1811−1869), https://victoriancommons.wordpress.com/tag/alexander-campbell-of-monzie/.

[40] William Matheson, ed., *The Blind Harper* (Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, 1970), 58−72.

In addition to blaming '*amaideachd oige*' ('the foolishness of youth'), the poet points out that, despite his high-profile involvement in church politics, the younger Campbell of Monzie is '*gun suim do reachdan a' Bhiobuill*' ('with no regard for the decrees of the Bible'). This brings her to what had, by the time this song was composed, become a trope of Clearance verse: that the land cleared of people would no longer be able to provide soldiers should they be needed to protect the country:[41]

Bu mhor am beud an duin'-uasal	More's the pity that the gentleman
Bhi cho truagh air a dhalladh,	Is so pitifully blinded,
Bhi cur cul ris an oigridh	To be turning has back on the young folk
Dh' fheudadh comhnadh leis fathast.	Who might yet come to his aid.
Na 'm biodh naimhdean an toir air,	If enemies were pursuing him,
A dheanadh foirneart adh aindeoin	To oppress him in spite of him,
Bhiodh iad ullamh, fo ordugh,	They would be ready, in order,
Dhol an comhdail a' chatha.	To go into the thick of battle.
Cha'n ion da nis a bhi 'n dochas	He needn't now hope
Ged dh' eireadh foirneart 's an Rioghachd	Though violence should arise in the kingdom
Gu'n tog iad claidheamh no gunna	That they will lift sword or gun
Dhol a chumail a chinn air.	To keep his head on his shoulders.
'S ged is laidir mac Lulaich	Although MacLullich is strong
'S na 'm bheil de chuid 's de ni aig',	And has wealth and property
Cha sheas e aite nan daoine –	He won't take the place of the people –
Mu Dhun-Chaoch tha iad lionmhor.	Who were numerous around Duncaoch.

Community and people are at the heart of this lament: the word *coimhearsnaich* ('neighbours') is used twice; various words for 'people' or 'population' (*sluagh*, *muinntir*, *daoine*) occur eight times; and *teaghlach* ('family'), *oigridh* ('young people'), *tuath-cheath'rn* ('common people'), *mnathan* ('women'), and *paisdean* ('infants') each appear once. Even more personal is the vignette in verse fourteen:

'S tric bha Paruig Mac Ailpein	Often was Peter MacAlpine
Gu ruig an achlais 's na digean,	Up to his armpits in the ditches,
'S greis eile ri ruamhar	And another spell spent digging
Gu fliuch fuar air droch-dhiol ann;	Cold and wet with little to show for it;
Ri fearas-tighe 'us aiteach	Working and cultivating the land
Bheir ioma barr ge b' e chi e –	Which will give many a crop, whoever will see it
Bidh nis a bhuannachd aig cach dheth	Which others will now benefit from
O 'n a' bhairlinn is ni dha.	Since he has received an eviction notice.

This level of detail is unusual in Gaelic Clearance poetry which, as Donald Meek has observed, has 'little to say about the harsh realities of Highland life prior to 1850'.[42] In a highly personalised way it captures something of the hard labour required to cultivate the land, and further underlines the injustice of these evictions. While an 1839 list of Barbreck crofters includes Peter MacAlpine, the absence of his name from the 1841 Census for the township is presumably evidence of his eviction. He may have been the seventy-five-year old Peter McAlpine, an agricultural labourer who is recorded in 1841 in Keppochan, near Cladich on the other side of Lochawe.[43]

[41] See, for example, Coinneach MacCoinnich's *Oran do na Caoraich Mhoire* ('Song to the Big Sheep'), *Orain Ghaidhealach agus Bearla air an Eadar-theangacha* (Duneadainn: Clo-bhuailt' air son an ughdair, 1792), 88−92; and Iain MacGriogair's *Tuireadh airson Slios Min Raineach* ('Lament for the smooth slope [i.e. north side of Loch Rannoch]'), *Orain Ghaelach* (Edin-bruaich: Adhamh Mac Neill agus a Chuideachd, 1801), 130−34.

[42] Meek, *Tuath*, 35.

[43] Census 1841 512/5/5.

This picture of the labourer at work also contrasts with the prevailing imagery of Clearance verse, which tends to emphasise the absence of people. In *Dìreadh a-mach ri Beinn Shianta* ('Climbing up towards Ben Shiant'), composed around ten years before Nic an Fhlèisdeir's song, Iain MacLachlainn (John MacLachlan, 1804–74) describes a post-Clearance scene containing '*lìonmhor bothan bochd gun àird air*' ('many a poor cottage without a roof') where – in place of the fire, children and heroes – there are rushes and sheep.[44] Nic an Fhlèisdeir's focus on the loss of tenants' hard-earned gains foreshadows what would become one of the key tenets of the late nineteenth-century campaign for crofters' rights which, as well as seeking security of tenure, sought the right to compensation for improvements carried out.

The *Cumha* laments the destruction of a thriving, self-supporting, independent township where everyone had enough to eat:

'S e so am baile tha ainmeil;	This is the township that is famous;
Tha e 'n seanchas gach duine	It is in everybody's conversation
'S ioma beul bha e biadhadh	Many a mouth it fed
Mu'n Mhaolan riabhach 's Dun-Mhungain	Around the grey Maolan and Dun Mungan

It depicts a self-regulating community that resolved its own disputes:

'S ann a chruinnicheadh iad comhluadh	They would gather together
A chur an ordugh gach rud ann,	To set everything in order
Gun dol gu maighstir no factor	Without going to master or factor
Le casaidean faoine.	With trivial accusations.

Martin MacGregor has recently discussed the centuries-long concept of the social contract which governed Gaelic-speaking society, and the failure of the landowning classes to maintain that contract during the Clearances.[45] So, too, Ronald Black has described how poetry reflected the social contract understood to exist between chief and clan, with the former held up as a protector of the poor, weak and needy.[46] Nic an Fhlèisdeir's song shows how this contract has broken down in Barbreck and how, rather than protecting the vulnerable, Campbell of Monzie has not just failed to support them, but has actively removed what support they had to fall back on:

Gu 'm bheil seann-daoine leointe,	Old people who lost their vigour with age
'Chaill an treoir leis an aois ann,	Are injured there,
Rinn ioma saothair 'us obair	Who worked and laboured
Mu'n do thog iad an teaghlaich,	To raise their family,
A shaoil gu 'm faigheadh iad comhnuidh	Who thought they would have a home
Fhad 's bu bheo iad 's ant shaoghal,	As long as they were alive,
'S gu 'm buaineadh iad far 'n do chuir iad,	And that they would reap where they sowed
'S nach biodh duilich mu 'n saothair.	And wouldn't regret their labour.

Women and children, often singled out by poets as being protected by the chief, are here depicted as abandoned, tearful and anxious at the prospect of eviction. Here it is the people themselves and their community who are shown as upholding the traditional ethos of hospitality and generosity, *a bheireadh biadh agus deirce / Do na feumanaich uile* ('who would give food and charity / To all those in need'). Unlike his late father who is described as *faoilidh* ('generous'), the younger Campbell fails in that virtue by comparison with his own tenants. The community, however, is ultimately powerless. Where tenants would traditionally have looked to their chief as an arbiter of justice, they

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[44] Meek, *Tuath*, 57–58, 192–93.

[45] MacGregor, 'Highland Clearances'.

[46] Ronald Black, *An Lasair. Anthology of 18th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2001), xxxii–xxxv.

now face eviction at the decree of the very person who should have been their *caraid 's a chuirt* ('friend in court'). The social contract, as Nic an Fhlèisdeir describes it, is in ruins.

Despite the anger and distress she expresses in her verse, Nic an Fhlèisdeir sees no solution other than passive acceptance, advocating the exercise of patience *(foighidinn 'fhoghlum)*, and placing her faith in the Bible and the life to come, where *cha bhi foirneart air fearann / 'S cha bhi creach ann mar tha e* ('there will be no oppression on land / And there will be no plunder as now'). Her allusion to the wheel of fortune – *Theag' gu'n tionndaidh a chuibheall* ('perhaps the wheel will turn') – offers hope that their fortunes will improve. This motif had been deployed at other times of crisis, notably among Jacobite poets from the late seventeenth century onwards; it would reappear later in the nineteenth century in the work of Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, whose song *Eilean a' Cheò* encouraged crofters to maintain their struggle for land rights.[47]

Catrìona Nic an Fhlèisdeir's two known songs are substantial and accomplished pieces, strongly suggesting that she must surely have composed a larger corpus of verse. Her *Cumha* offers a visceral account of evictions in the village of Barbreck and the destruction of a thriving community, and its survival speaks to its sentiments retaining importance and relevance fifty years later. Unlike later poetry of the Clearances that looks back at a desolate landscape from which people have been evicted, this song gives a sense of the human impact of those evictions on individual community members, and does so within a loose framework of poetic rhetoric which the song's audience would fully understand. It suggests a development of the traditional role of women as keeners, here keening the death of a community rather than of an individual. It sheds valuable light on a forgotten poet, and offers an unparalleled, contemporary sense of the 'lived experience' of eviction in this mid-nineteenth-century Gaelic-speaking township.

Appendix

Cumha do Mhuinntir a' Bharra-Bhric, Taobh Loch-Atha

Le Catriona nic Lachlainn, Bean Araidh anns a' Bhaile Cheudna, 1840[48]

Air Fonn 'An raoir a chunnaic mi 'm bruadar
A dh'fhag luaineach mi 'm chadal'

Och 'us och mar a ta mi!	Och and och for how I am!
Tha mi 'n trath s' deth fo mhulad	I am grieved
Mu na coimhearsnaich ghradhach	For the dear neighbours
A ta laimh rium a' fuireach;	Who live next to me;
'S leann dubh air mo shuilean,	Tears in my eyes
Mu'n sgeul ùr thainig h-ugainn,	With this new tale that has reached us
A bhi 'g ar sgaradh o cheile	That we are to be sundered from each other
'S sinn bhi cho reidhbheartach uile.	When we are all so comfortable.
Tha Mon-gheadh a' cur cùl ruinn;	Monzie is turning his back on us;
Rinn e burach na dunaidh	He has made a woeful mess
Air na daoine bha baigheil,	For the kind people
Anns an aite so fuireach;	Who live here;
Fhuair e tuathanach araidh,	He has got a certain farmer,

[47] Damhnait Ní Suaird, 'Jacobite rhetoric and terminology in the political poems of the Fernaig MS (1688−1693)', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 19 (1999): 113−15; William Gillies, 'Gaelic songs of the 'Forty-Five', *Scottish Studies* 30 (1991), 27; Mairi Nic-a-Phearsain, *Dain agus Orain Ghaidhlig* (Inbhirnis: A. agus U. MacCoinnich, 1891), 7.

[48] *Oban Times,* 4 January 1890, 3. The translation provided here is guided by that provided by Malcolm MacFarlane, but diverges from it in places.

Domhnull laidir Mac Lulaich – *Cha 'n abhar farmaid an trath s' e,* *'S mallachd chaich dol 'n a chuideachd.*	Strong Donald MacLulich He is no cause of envy now With the curse of others following him.
'S e so am baile tha ainmeil; *Tha e 'n seanchas gach duine* *'S ioma beul bha e biadhadh* *Mu'n Mhaolan riabhach 's Dun-Mhungain* *Ach 's ann an taobh so de 'n gharadh* *Tha 'n sluagh gun aireamh a' fuireach;* *'S mo chuid agam-s de'n tursadh* *'S a bhothain cul na Druim-buidhe.*	This is the township that is famous; It is in everybody's conversation Many a mouth it fed Around the grey Maolan and Dun Mungan But it's on this side of the dyke That the countless people live; And my share of sorrow is In the bothy at the back of Druim Buidhe.
Gu 'm bheil seann-daoine leointe, *'Chaill an treoir leis an aois ann,* *Rinn ioma saothair 'us obair* *Mu'n do thog iad an teaghlaich,* *A shaoil gu 'm faigheadh iad comhnuidh* *Fhad 's bu bheo iad 's ant shaoghal,* *'S gu 'm buaineadh iad far 'n do chuir iad,* *'S nach biodh duilich mu 'n saothair.*	Old people who lost their vigour with age Are injured there, Who worked and laboured To raise their family, Who thought they would have a home As long as they were alive, And that they would reap where they sowed And wouldn't regret their labour.
Ach mar chloich as an athar *Fhuair iad brath air a' chaochladh:* *Thainig teachdaireachd chabhaig* *Bho Ionar-Atha, le maoir oirr'* *Iad a chruinn 'chadh 'n a fhianuis,* *A chur a bhriathran an ceill doibh –* *Fhuair iad sgeul ri thoirt-dachaidh* *Nach robh taitneach ri eisdeachd.* *'S e Mon-gheadh rinn ar mealladh* *Leis an aidmheil bu mhilse,* *Aig ceann drochaid Atha* *'N uair a ghabh sinn an dinneir –* *Sheas e suas air an sgafal* *An coslas taitneach a' Chriosdaidh;* *Ach 's ann an diugh rinn e dhearbhadh* *Gu 'm bu shearmoin gun bhrigh i.*	But like a bolt from the blue They heard otherwise: A speedy message came From Inverary with a factor To have them gather in his presence, To explain matters to them – They received news to take home That was not pleasant to hear. Monzie deceived us With the sweetest of declarations, At the end of the Awe bridge When we took dinner – He stood up on the platform With the pleasant appearance of a Christian; But today he has proved That it was a sermon with no substance.
B' i siod a' chuirm a bha soghmhor; *Bha muilt-roiste gun dith ann,* *Damh biadhte, slan fallain,* *'S air a ghearradh 'n a mhiribh,* *Aran cruinneachd am pailteas,* *'S deoch chasgadh arn iota;* *Ach 's daor rinn sinn a paigheadh* *'S e nis gar fagail 'n ar dibrich.*	That was the luxurious feast; There was no lack of mutton, Well-fed venison, healthy and wholesome, And cut into pieces, Plenty wheat bread, And drink to quench our thirst; But dearly we paid for it, And he has made us outcasts.
Na 'm bu mhac mar ant athair; *Bha e mathasach, faoilidh;* *Bha e iochdmhor r' a thuath-cheath'rn,* *'S cha d' rinn e gluasad gun aobhar;* *Bha e iriosal, baigheil,* *A deanamh fabhair ri daonie (sic)* *'S gu 'n robh beannachd ant shloigh leis* *A' dol fo 'n fhoid aig a' chaochladh.*	If only the son were like the father; He was benevolent, hospitable; He was merciful to the tenantry, He didn't remove them without reason; He was humble, kindly, Doing favours for people And the blessing of the people was with him Going to the grave at his death.

Ach tha amaideachd oige
Ri moran call do na miltean;
Nach eisd comhairle 'cheartais
Gun suim do reachdan a' Bhiobuill.
Ach ma thionnd'ar a thuigse,
'S e thighuin gu gliocsas na firinn,
Suilean inntinn theid fhosgladh
'S chi e 'n lochd bh' anns an ni so.

But the foolishness of youth
Is cause of ruin for thousands;
They listen not to the counsel of righteousness
With no regard for the decrees of the Bible.
But should his understanding be changed,
And he come to a knowledge of the truth,
His mind's eyes will be opened
And he will see the harm that was in this thing.

Bu mhor am beud an duin'-uasal
Bhi cho truagh air a dhalladh,
Bhi cur cul ris an oigridh
Dh' fheudadh comhnadh leis fathast.
Na 'm biodh naimhdean an toir air,
A dheanadh foirneart adh aindeoin,
Bhiodh iad ullamh, fo ordugh,
Dhol an comhdail a' chatha.

More's the pity that the gentleman
Is so pitifully blinded,
To be turning his back on the young folk
Who might yet come to his aid.
If enemies were pursuing him,
To oppress him in spite of him,
They would be ready, in order,
To go into the thick of battle.

Cha'n ion da nis a bhi 'n dochas
Ged dh' eireadh foirneart 's an Rioghachd
Gu'n tog iad claidheamh no gunna
Dhol a chumail a chinn air.
'S ged is laidir mac Lulaich
'S na 'm bheil de chuid 's de ni aig',
Cha sheas e aite nan daoine –
Mu Dhun-Chaoch tha iad lionmhor.

He needn't now hope
Though violence should arise in the kingdom
That they will lift sword or gun
To keep his head on his shoulders.
Although MacLullich is strong
And has wealth and property
He won't take the place of the people –
Who are numerous around Dun Caoch.

'S goirt leam caradh nan daoine
Bha ri faoileachd 'us furan,
Ris a mhuinntir bha faontrach
Feadh ant shaoghail a' siubhal;
A bheireadh biadh agus deirce
Do na feumanaich uile –
'S bochd an diugh e ri radh
Nach bi 'n an ait, ach aon dhuine.

I am grieved for the lot of the people
Who were kindly and hospitable
To the wanderers and travellers
Of the world;
Who would give food and charity
To all those in need –
It's sad to say today
That there will only be one person in their place.

'S mor tha mis ann am barail
Gu'm feud mi aithris gu saor dhuibh
Nach eil an leithid 'n a fhearann
Ach gle ainneamh ri fhaotainn;
'S ann a chruinnicheadh iad comhluadh
A chur an ordugh gach rud ann,
Gun dol gu maighstir no factor
Le casaidean faoine.

I am much of the opinion
I may freely tell you
That their likes are rare
In all his land.
They would gather together
To set everything in order,
Without going to master or factor
With trivial accusations.

'S tric bha Paruig Mac Ailpein
Gu ruig an achlais 's na digean,
'S greis eile ri ruamhar
Gu fliuch fuar air droch-dhiol ann;
Ri fearas-tighe 'us aiteach
Bheir ioma barr ge b' e chi e –
Bidh nis a bhuannachd aig cach dheth
O' n a' bhairlinn is ni dha.

Often was Peter MacAlpine
Up to his armpits in the ditches,
And another spell spent digging
Cold and wet with little to show for it;
Working and cultivating the land
Which will give many a crop, whoever will see it –
Which others will now benefit from
Since he has received an eviction notice.

Gu'm bi mnathan 's paisdean
'S an deoir gu laidir a' sruthadh,
An àm togail na h-imrich,

Women and children's tears
Will flow freely
At the time of flitting

'S iad fo iomgain 'us mulad; *'S mairg bhitheas 'g an eisdeachd,* *'S trom an ceum air an turas,* *Ag cur an cul ris an aite* *'S am bu ghnath leo bhi fuireach.*	And them anxious and sorrowful; It is pitiful to listen to them, Heavy is their step on their journey, Turning their backs on the place In which they used to live.
Ach glacaibh misneach 's bibh laidir, *'S bidh Righ nan Gràs air an stiuir dhuibh;* *Fosglaidh Esan dhuibh aite* *Ged tha cach a cur cuil ribh;* *Theag' gu'n tionndaidh a chuibheall,* *Mar tha mi guidhe le durachd,* *'S gu'm pill sibh fhathast le beartas* *Do'n Bharra-bhreac chum ar duthchais.*	But take courage and be strong, And the King of Grace will be your guide; He will open a place for you Though others abandon you. Perhaps the wheel will turn, As I fervently wish, And you may return yet with riches to Barbreck, to our[49] rightful land.
Nam biodh sibhse co eolach *Ri' daoine mora na tire,* *'S gu'm faighte caraid 's a chuirt duibh* *A sgoilteadh cuisean le firinn,* *Dh' fhanadh sibh mar a tha sibh,* *Air an laraich car bliadhna,* *Dh' aindeoin na rinn iad uile,* *'S sibh bhi murach g' a dhioladh.*	If you were as knowing As the great ones of the land, And if you could get a friend in court Who would analyse affairs truthfully, You could remain as you are In the place for another year, Despite all they did And you ready to recompense him.
Ach 's e foighidinn 'fhoghlum *An ni is coir dhuinn a dheanadh,* *'S a bhi cur casg' air ar naduir,* *Tha an trath-s' air dhroch fheuchainn* *An Ti thuirt "'s leamsa 'n dioghaltas,"* *Mar tha 'm Biobull ag radhainn,* *Gu 'm bi e reir mar tha sgriobhte,* *'G a chur an gniomh mar is aill leis.*	But to exercise patience Is what we should do And to restrain our nature Which is currently sorely tried. He who said 'vengeance is mine', As the Bible says, It will be as it is written Each thing will be done as he wishes.
'Nuair theid an aimsir so thairis *'S chuirear casg' air an namhaid,* *'S bhios riaghladh na talmhainn* *Aig naoimh an Ti a's ro airde,* *Cha bhi foirneart air fearann,* *'S cha bhi creach ann mar tha e;* *'S ann bhios gach cuis ann an ceartas.* *Mar tha 'm Focal ag radhainn.*	When this time has passed And the enemy is vanquished And the ruling of the earth Is in the hands of the saints of the highest One, There will be no oppression on land And there will be no plunder as now; All things will be disposed of justly As the Word says.
Cha'n ioghnadh mise bhi tursach *'S a bhi fo mhulad mu 'r deighinn;* *'S ioma là thug mi easlan,* *'S bha bhur freasdal dhomh feumail;* *'S ann fhuair mi coimhearsnaich chairdeil,* *Gach aon toirt barr air a cheile;* *'S bu chruaidh an turn rinn an duine* *'Chuir sgapadh buileach 's an treud so.*	It is no wonder I am sad And sorrowful about you Many days I was ill, And your attention helped me; I had friendly neighbours Each one better than the next; It was a harsh turn brought about by the man Who completely scattered this flock.

[49] The text, as published, has '*ar*' (our) which MacFarlane translates as 'your' which would be '*ur*'. The two words are readily confused and I have opted to translate as 'our' to reflect the meaning of the published Gaelic text.

Ach tha latha gu tighinn.	But there is a day coming,
Ma chreideas sinne an Soisgeul,	If we believe the Gospel
'S an teid ar cruinneachadh comhluadh–	When we will be gathered together–
Siod a chomhdhail bhios aoibhinn	That will be the joyful meeting
'S cha bhi Mon-gheadh no Mac Lulaich,	And neither Monzie nor MacLullich,
No aon duine fo 'n ghrein so,	Nor any man under this sun,
A sgapas sinn as a' chrò sin	Will disperse us from that fold
'S am faigh sinn solas nach treig sinn.	Where we will get happiness that will not forsake us.
'S diomhain dhomhsa bhi 'g aithris	It is in vain I try to tell
Na bheil de eallaich air m' inntinn	The burden that is on my mind
Mu dheigh muinntir a' bhaile–	About the people of the township–
Mo mhile beannachd le sith dhoibh.	My thousand blessings with peace to them.
Guidheam aran 'us bainne,	I pray for bread and milk for them,
Spreidh 'us sabhal lan innlinn,	Livestock and barns full of fodder,
Saoghal fad 'an deagh bheatha	Long and good lives
'S na h-uile latha gun dith dhoibh.	And every day lacking for nothing.

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John Dewar's Islay, Jura and Colonsay: A Bird's Eye View

VIRGINIA BLANKENHORN

Abstract
This review article attempts to assess the first fruits of a monumental undertaking by Ronald Black, Christopher Dracup and their colleagues aimed at publishing in their entirety the historical accounts and lore collected by John Dewar (1802–1872) in the West Highlands of Scotland between 1862 and 1872. It does so from the perspective of a general reader, anticipating that Scottish historians, linguists, onomasticians, ethnologists, folktale experts, musicians and others will offer more specialised critiques in due course.

***John Dewar's Islay, Jura and Colonsay.* Ronald Black and Christopher Dracup, eds. Kinross: John Dewar Publishers, 2024. Pp. 557 + ix. Maps; illus. ISBN 9781068651601.**

Launched in 2017, the Dewar Project was conceived with the immodest aim of publishing the entirety of the Dewar Manuscripts, the ten-volume collection of oral historical accounts recorded by John Dewar (1802–1872) from some 328 informants in the West Highlands between 1862 and 1872.[1] The present volume is the first of ten, to be published (assuming adequate financial support and the longevity of the project team) at two-year intervals between now and 2044.

Between 1859 and 1862, John Dewar collected stories for J. F. Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, and it was with Campbell's warm encouragement and support that he subsequently undertook his collection of popular historical lore. Campbell's numerous annotations and commentary, bound within the manuscripts alongside Dewar's text, offer insight into the relationship between the two men as well as an appreciation of the accounts themselves, which Campbell describes as 'bricks, from which some future historian may make something' (12):

> These stories are anecdotes, family traditions about individuals, adventures of individuals at battles which really were fought, &c. This, which is the popular view of great events looked at from below, is microscopic and accurate for details, but hazy, vague, distorted and mythical for all that is beyond the people. … The same power of popular memory which has preserved the framework of popular tales for hundreds if not for many thousands of years…has power only to preserve one kind of true history, and even that is apt to become mythical. (12–13)

Campbell goes on to observe that 'the people do not remember great events which concern the nation', but rather the 'local fights' that involved places known to them and individuals from whom they themselves, or people they knew, were descended (14). In seeking to connect these 'great events looked at from below' with documentary evidence of what actually transpired, the Dewar team has set itself a considerable challenge.

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[1] Ronald Black, 'The Dewar Project', in Wilson McLeod, Anja Gunderloch and Rob Dunbar (eds), *Cànan is Cultar / Language and Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 10* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 2021), 73–86. The Dewar Project website (www.dewarproject.com) introduces the project team, describes and illustrates the ten Dewar manuscripts and the set of English translations made by Islay schoolmaster Hector MacLean (1818–1893), provides comprehensive story-lists for all ten projected volumes, and tracks the progress of the work.

The complexity of this task is reflected in the organisation of this first volume, which the authors describe as 'the people's history of Islay, Jura and Colonsay, in their own language, from 1585 to 1833' (2). Dewar was a remarkable person with many gifts, but the absence of any discernible organising principle in his manuscripts required the editorial team to pick one. While the idea of a thematic inventory was originally tempting, they eventually chose to group the accounts geographically by region, and then chronologically within each region.

In this volume, the stories are divided into eight sections or 'parts', each set of stories focused on particular events or individuals – a narrative focus unsurprisingly similar to that of the hero-tales familiar to Dewar and, more importantly, to his informants. Following a chronology that begins with the realignment of power relations in the century following the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493, the stories in Parts 1 through 5 recall the gore-strewn landscapes and larger-than-life characters of *Linn nan Creach* (the 'Age of Plunders'): the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart between the Macdonalds (Clann Iain Mhòir) and the MacLeans of Mull; the feud between MacLarty of Dun Aula and the MacKays in the Rhinns of Islay as well as other 'lesser' feuds; the exploits of Colla Ciotach and his sons; and the gradual (and very bloody) takeover of Islay and Jura by the Campbells in the seventeenth century. With Part 6, we mercifully arrive at the eighteenth century, when property in these islands was generally bought with money and political capital rather than blood, and when the Campbell hegemony included the Shawfield Campbells, from whom J. F. Campbell himself was descended.

These six sections form the core of the book.[2] The stories are presented as parallel texts, with Dewar's Gaelic text – edited and appropriately streamlined by Christopher Dracup – on the left, and Black's translation on the right. It is thus possible to read either text in linear fashion. This is enjoyable, because both the Gaelic texts and the translations successfully preserve the oral quality of the original recitation, with lively dialogue and racy turns of phrase. The following exchange could have been scripted for a John Wayne movie (140–141):

> *…thug iad sùil 'nan déigh agus chunnaic iad bannal de mharc-shluaigh gu dian a' tigheachd air an tòir, agus bha aon fhear fada air thoiseach air càch. Thubhairt Fear Chroiginnis, "Ach tha sinn dheth a-nis!"*
>
> […they looked behind them and saw a troop of cavalry coming headlong in pursuit of them, with one man far ahead of the others. The laird of Craignish said, "Damn. We've had it now."]

These are indeed stories that one might read aloud, presuming an audience with a thirst for heroic deeds and the stomach for blood.

For those interested in the alignment between these accounts and the documentary record, however, the process is more challenging. For starters, it is absolutely necessary to keep a bookmark at the endnotes to each section, for it is these notes that contain the commentaries – the fruits of meticulous research into parish records, census records, maps, genealogies, and a multitude of other primary and secondary sources – that elucidate the events lying behind the oral accounts. Often there are several endnotes within a single story, and the level of detail – veering sometimes into speculation – can feel overwhelming. It takes a considerable effort of will (or possibly a fierce interest in a particular historical event or character) to disrupt the flow of story in order to give the commentaries the attention they undoubtedly deserve.

For linguists, the Gaelic texts are bound to be of interest, but not for the reasons we might assume. While one peculiar dialect feature is indeed revealed in the accounts, which the authors suggest (9) maps onto a territory they identify as Clan Donald South (Islay, Colonsay, south Jura, Kintyre, west Arran, Rathlin, and the Glens of Antrim), the principal linguistic interest of Dewar's work lies elsewhere. Lacking the modern convenience of a recording device, Dewar took notes

[2] There are actually eight 'parts', the seventh containing fragments, and the eighth three texts in English.

when first visiting the storyteller, relied on those notes to guide his remarkable memory in reconstructing what he had heard, wrote the story down in his own words, and then revisited the informant to confirm the details. The stories are, therefore, written down not word-for-word in his informant's dialect, but as Dewar would have told them in his own Arrochar Gaelic – 'a dialect otherwise unknown to scholarship' (10).

Place-name scholars will find this book an onomastic gold-mine, as some of the names attested in Dewar's manuscripts are found nowhere else. Many of the stories likely owe their survival to the fact that they explain how a particular place or geographic feature is thought to have got its name, regardless of whether the explanation is ultimately justified by historical or linguistic evidence. Place-names mentioned in the text, whether in Gaelic or in English, are listed in a comprehensive gazetteer – or perhaps more accurately, four gazetteers, one for each island, plus one which lists place-names on the Scottish mainland or elsewhere. Readers interested in place-names may want additional bookmarks if they wish to avoid mistakenly searching for an Islay place-name in the Jura gazetteer.

Dewar's informants are themselves of interest, and provide additional clues to his collecting process. Based on Dewar's own notes about his informants' names, origins, and where they were interviewed, a twenty-eight page section of the book (429–457) summarizes what is known about the thirty-eight people (including one woman) whom the authors regard as Dewar's 'actual or potential' informants for this volume. In some cases quite a lot was known: the biography of Jura schoolmaster John Campbell, for example, covers five pages (433–437). The team's diligence in pursuit of the public records needed to prepare these biographies is scarcely less remarkable than the information they managed to dig up.

There is no doubt that this book will be of enormous value to scholarship. Ethnologists should go to the Dewar Project website and consult the thematic index prepared by team member Ryan Dziadowiec that, while not included in the book itself, provides valuable insight into its contents.[3] For those interested in where these stories appeared in the manuscripts themselves, a concordance (428) allows the reader to convert manuscript identifiers to the story numbers given in the text. Christopher Dracup's annotation of the Gaelic texts provides detailed insight into the idiosyncrasies of Dewar's Gaelic as well as his working method. Indeed, those interested in the working methods of nineteenth-century collectors may want to compare Dewar's with those of Hector MacLean, another collector and close confidant of J. L. Campbell's, whose subsequent translations of Dewar's manuscripts were an important resource for the present work (22).

In attempting to serve all of these scholarly constituencies, the authors have mostly succeeded. There are, however, some difficulties. Few of us are well informed in all of the relevant disciplines, and the undoubted riches of this book could have been made more accessible to a non-specialist reader. While the endnotes to each section allow readers to consider details of the oral accounts in light of documentary evidence, they cannot be read consecutively, and thus do not easily reveal the broader background which would contextualise those accounts as a group. Black tacitly acknowledges this problem by summarising, in a segment at the back of the book, what is known to historians regarding the Battles of Tràigh Ghruinneart and Beinn Bhigeir. A similar roundup of facts and context would have been helpful in other cases, too. (The adventures of Colla Ciotach and his sons are, we note, to feature in other Dewar volumes, and perhaps a segment of this sort will be provided then.) The endnotes to each group of stories tend to take up more pages (of smaller print) than do the stories themselves but, as structured, they require the reader to flip back and forth and maintain multiple trains of thought, as they are impossible to read *seriatim*.

The structure of the endnotes also presents a challenge to someone wishing to read the Gaelic texts while following the commentary. The endnotes are numbered sequentially, the first notes referring to the Gaelic text and mostly dealing with manuscript and textual matters, while the

[3] https://www.dewarproject.com/Commentaries/Themes.pdf. Accessed 22 September 2024.

remainder – the vast majority – refer to the English text, and deal with historical facts and everything else. This means that the person who has read the Gaelic text must then go back to the beginning and read Black's translation in order to connect with the historical commentary. While a solution to this problem is not obvious, the situation is not ideal.

A further difficulty is geographic. The book contains five attractively-drawn maps, including one of the whole of Scotland and the north coast of Ireland (x); one each of Islay (73), Jura (129), and Colonsay (41); and a detailed battle-plan of the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart (405). One problem, however, is that some place-names are inexplicably omitted from these maps, despite their being mentioned in the text. For example, the reader can only guess about the possible locations of Robolls, Kepolls, Scaristle, Nerebus and Ardnave, all missing from the map of Islay (73), although they are specifically mentioned on the opposite page as having been granted to MacLean of Duart in the 1540s. And why is Corsapol, whose location is essential to understanding the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart, missing from the battle plan (405)? While it does appear on the larger map of Islay (73), the reader should not have to hunt for it.

A larger problem is that the maps of individual islands provide only a sketchy sense of the surrounding geographical context. Of greater use to the struggling non-specialist would be a series of historical maps showing the extent of the lands held by the various clans whose activities are described in these stories. At a minimum, it would be helpful if the maps could include adjacent areas of the mainland and other islands to illustrate the points of origin of some of these incursions. The map of Colonsay (41), for example, illustrates the *dùthaich* of the MacPhees, but is silent about their adversaries the MacLeans (Mull) and the MacCallums (Poltalloch, near Lochgilphead in Argyll). Likewise, the map of Jura (129) is placed at the beginning of Part 3; but while one of the 'lesser feuds' described in that section probably occurred in Jura, the section also contains accounts of feuds involving the MacKays of the Rhinns (Islay), the MacLartys of Craignish (Argyll), and the MacLeans of Lochbuie (Mull). A map that took in these adjacent territories and showed all of the place-names mentioned in the accounts and the commentary would help the reader grasp the geographical context of these events and more easily comprehend their wider significance.

Black notes that the Highland clans' propensity for internecine warfare, particularly in the sixteenth century, ultimately cost them the opportunity to present a united front against the Crown's determination to destroy Gaelic civilisation (403). Such concerns were not, however, reflected in the traditional accounts collected by Dewar, which focus less upon national politics than upon how events were experienced by individuals. Indeed, while the Crown's actions were predicated upon the presumed nationhood of Scotland as a whole, what John MacInnes termed the 'conceptual unity' of Gaeldom, obliquely expressed in the poetry of its warrior class, did not manifest itself in overtly nationalist terms until the eighteenth century, well after many of the accounts in this volume first took shape.[4] What Dewar collected were, after all, stories which – like the hero-tales – were told to entertain as well as to inform, to pass the winter nights and reinforce community identity. While they may fail in terms of chronological accuracy, and while they tend to conflate events and create composite characters, they nonetheless preserve, as J. F. Campbell noted, a kind of history 'that is apt to become mythical'.

The truth of Campbell's observation is illustrated by an episode preserved in the two accounts, obtained from different informants, describing the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart. One tells of a pair of brothers, named as Donald and Neil, sons of an Islay blacksmith named MacEachern (89); the other does not name them, but identifies them as smiths 'of the tribe of the long-shanked smith in Ireland' (99). One of the brothers has gone to Mull as a young man, returning to Islay with MacLean's retinue, while the other has remained in Islay and taken up arms with MacDonald.

[4] John MacInnes, 'The panegyric code in Gaelic poetry and its historical background', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 50 (1978): 436–437.

They meet in single combat at what both accounts describe as 'a bend in the river' – identified thereafter as *Camag nan Goibhnean* ('the Little Bend of the Smiths') – where they fail to recognise one another. After making every attempt to kill each other with battle-axes, one eventually takes a closer look at his opponent and, addressing him in verse, expresses the hope that he should survive; whereupon they both recognise each other, lay aside their weapons, sit down, reminisce, take snuff, and fight no more.

This account, Black tells us, is 'something of a motif', citing its occurrence in a traditional account of the 'Battle of the Shirts' (*Blàr nan Léine*) fought in July, 1544, between the MacDonalds of Clanranald, led by Iain Muideartach, and the Lovat Frasers in which only about a dozen people – out of hundreds – survived; in that account, preserved in Dewar's second volume, Black tells us that the episode ended differently (115, n. 55). It is very likely that those who sought to describe the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart would have heard the accounts of *Blàr nan Léine*, fought only fifty years before. At the same time, readers familiar with the Ulster saga *Tain Bó Cuailnge* ('The Cattle Raid of Cooley') will inescapably recognise this episode's striking similarity to the culminating encounter in the Irish tale, much of it expressed in verse, in which Cú Chulainn engages his foster-brother Ferdia at a ford in a river, killing him and leaving himself griefstricken. The close relationship between the two men, the fact that the confrontation takes the form of single combat by a river, the reference to the brothers' Irish origin, the use of poetry to express emotion, and the geographical proximity of Islay to Ulster which was, after all, part of the *dùthaich* of Clan Donald South – indeed, it would be remarkable if an event as consequential as the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart did not remind Islay storytellers of the *Táin*, a story which must have been well known to them. 'Mythical' indeed!

What should also interest us, however, is not so much the fact that this story is included, but why it was included, and how it has been altered. Unlike Cú Chulainn and Ferdia, the brothers ultimately refrain from killing each other, and lay down their arms – welcome narrative relief from all of the bloodletting and mayhem. Few of us today can imagine living in a society where people are regularly hanged, beheaded, burnt alive, and massacred in huge, pitched battles; where the dead are left lying in heaps and the rivers run with their blood; or where retribution requires further slaughter and the razing of people's homes, as happened when the MacLeans eventually avenged their defeat at Tràigh Gruinneart on the entire population of Islay (420–423). Even so, we have begun to understand the toll taken by post-traumatic stress on those who have witnessed or participated in such things, and we know – because the lament poetry, especially the women's poetry, is full of it – that post-traumatic stress was common in sixteenth-century Scotland. How could it have been otherwise, given the number of people from all parts of the society who were involved – people who not only knew one another, but were often close relations. Neuroscientists studying the effect of extreme stress on human memory have concluded that what they call 'explicit memory' – what people are able to verbalise after a stressful or traumatic event – is intrinsically unreliable.[5] Details become disordered, the perception of time becomes compressed, and witnesses may enter a dissociative state that depersonalises the experience; and when they do eventually reconstruct the event in their own minds, they do so in ways that they can bear to live with.

While we may be tempted to attribute the narrative unreliability of accounts such as those collected by John Dewar to confusion, forgetfulness, and the vagaries of oral tradition, we might also consider that there is more to it than that, and that some of the 'forgetting' and reconstruction

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[5] Peter Maslowski and Don Winslow, *Looking for a Hero: Staff Sergeant Joe Ronnie Hooper and the Vietnam War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 239–243. For an application of this concept to women's poetry of lamentation, see Virginia Blankenhorn, 'From ritual to rhetoric, from rhetoric to art: Women's poetry of lamentation in the Gaelic world' in Blankenhorn, *Tradition, Transmission, Transformation: Essays on Scottish Gaelic Poetry and Song* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), 285–296.

of events was deliberate. Unlike the hero tales of tradition, the accounts collected by Dewar were initially composed, heard, and reshaped by people who themselves witnessed the events described. The fact that the episode of the smiths occurs in two of Dewar's accounts suggests that it was part of the story from the beginning, with only minor differences emerging over the 260-plus years before Dewar recorded it. The meaning of the episode is unaltered. The storytellers who evoked the *Táin* in recounting the events of Tràigh Ghruinneart found a powerful way of expressing the savagery of the battle; but in changing the ending of the encounter at the bend in the river they asserted the humanity of those who fought on both sides – who were, after all, brothers. What in literary studies would merit the term 'intertextuality' is doubtless an essential part of oral tradition and the construction of myth. At the same time, we should not dismiss such echoes as unconscious reflexes of the storyteller's art, but rather recognise that they were included for specific reasons – for the associations they carried for listeners, and for the meaning assigned to them in a particular narrative context by the storyteller himself.

What about history? Recent historiographic writing has pointed out that the definition of 'history' is a moving target. One generation of writers may seek to contextualise events within a nationalist narrative arc, while the next may valorise 'objectivity' by ascribing events to arbitrary and impersonal forces, thereby de-emphasising the emotional resonance of those events for readers.[6] Whether or not an historical account is deemed 'accurate' may depend upon whom you ask, because how people feel about past events inevitably shapes their response to future challenges, and directly affects how those responses are in turn encoded as 'history'. The traditional accounts Dewar collected may not agree with the documentary evidence, but it was those stories that sharpened people's emotional commitment to continuing the brutal tit-for-tat that characterised *Linn nan Creach*. We must, therefore, consider the contemporaneous oral testimonies, preserved by Dewar's informants, central to our understanding of this turbulent period and of those who lived to tell its tales.

Finally, readers of this book will surely have their favourite moments. Given my own interests, two incidents with musical connections caught my eye. As Black points out (297, n. 190), a good deal has been written about 'Pìobaireachd Dhùn Naomhaig', another title of which is 'Caismeachd a' Phìobaire d'a Mhaighistir' ('The Piper's Warning to his Master').[7] Describing the circumstances of its composition, Dewar's informant quotes three stanzas of the pibroch song 'A Cholla mo rùin' which he said were 'composed to fit the melody' (234–235).[8] Both the pìobaireachd and the song were recorded by fieldworkers in the twentieth century, and readers can hear them – and judge the similarities between them – by following the hyperlinks indicated.

A second connection with the piping repertoire is less straightforward. In the story of the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart Dewar's informant, Neil MacTaggart, tells how MacDonald, prior to leading his men into battle against the MacLeans, says to his piper, 'Play us a new tune, piper, one you've never played before'. After casting around for anything that might bring a tune to mind, the piper spots a dairymaid and is reminded of a song beginning *Oi-a-thó dheoghaill na laoigh*

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[6] For example, the historical understanding of the Irish Famine (1845–1849) has been the subject of considerable debate along these lines since publication of Cecil Woodham-Smith's polemic *The Great Hunger* in 1962; see Claudia Carroll (2016), '"The Great Hunger is great novel": Historiography and meta-fiction in Joseph O'Connor's *Star of the Sea*', The Comparative Literature Undergraduate Journal, University of California, Berkeley 7/1; (https://ucbcluj.org/the-great-hunger-is-great-novel-historiography-and-meta-fiction-in-joseph-oconnors-star-of-the-sea/), accessed 26 October 2024.

[7] Hugh Archibald Fraser, 'Pìobaireachd Dhùn Naomhaig'. Recorded in 1965 by Dr Barrie J. M. Orme, School of Scottish Studies Archives SA1965.166.B5; Tobar an Dualchais track 64009, www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/64009?l=en.

[8] www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/40434?l=en. Recorded in 1950 by John Lorne Campbell from the redoubtable Mary Morrison (1890–1973) of Ersary, Barra, who includes a snatch of *canntaireachd* at the end of her performance.

('Oi-a-hó the calves have sucked'). Quoting four lines of this song, MacTaggart tells Dewar that this tune 'was later called "Pìobaireachd Thràigh Ghruinneart"' (86–87). This song, 'A hù a hò, dheoghail na laoigh', described as a milking song, was recorded in South Uist in 1970.[9] Black notes that no pìobaireachd named for the Battle of Tràigh Ghruinneart has been identified, although he reports that a composition entitled 'Pìobaireachd of Ceann traigh Ghruinard' is listed in an account of Islay by John Murdoch published in 1859 (114–115, n. 50; see also 381–2 and notes). Perhaps a piping scholar will know if the tune MacTaggart had in mind might have been known to pipers by another name.

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Tobar an Dualchais. https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk.

[9] www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/track/105385?l=en. Recorded from Kate Nicolson (1901–1976), Iochdar, South Uist, by Peter Cooke.

The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill: A Timely Appreciation

JANE PETTEGREE

Abstract
A remarkable project to record the *Complete Songs* of Robert Tannahill, the Paisley weaver-poet, has concluded with the 2024 release of a fifth and final disc, a fitting tribute marking the 250th anniversary of Tannahill's birth. This review article discusses why Tannahill is an important and distinctive voice in the Scottish traditional song repertoire, and assesses the achievements of the recording project.

Fred Freeman, *The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill*, volumes 1–4, Brechin All Records, 2006–2017; *Robert Tannahill Songs Volume CCL: A 250th Anniversary Tribute,* Duende Records, 2024.

Robert Tannahill (1774–1810), the weaver-poet of Paisley, deserves to be better known and more widely celebrated as a distinctive contributor to Scotland's lyrical tradition. It is therefore welcome that Fred Freeman's *Complete Songs* project has come to fruition, ensuring that as many of Tannahill's songs as could be recorded have now been published in audible form. Freeman's first Tannahill CD appeared in 2006; the fifth and last in 2024 – the 250th anniversary of Tannahill's birth. 'Complete' may need some clarification, as some songs needed significant reassembly from fragments, and others required the composition of new melodies where the original tunes have either been lost or are intractable. What has been achieved is remarkable, if occasionally puzzling, and should inspire both musicians and academics to take a fresh look at Tannahill's contribution to Scottish lyrical verse.

Reappraising Robert Tannahill: A timely intervention
A few of Tannahill's songs are well-known, although the best-known of them, 'Wild Mountain Thyme', is a significantly-adapted version of 'The Braes o Balquihidder', made in the 1950s by Belfast singer Francis McPeake, that sits at some distance from what Tannahill actually wrote. While the emergence of Paisley folk group the Tannahill Weavers in 1968 made the poet's name more widely recognised in Scotland and beyond, the more academic end of Scottish literary studies has – if mentioning Tannahill at all – classified him as simply a lesser Robert Burns, one of many provincial writers who sought to emulate the Bard's shooting star without quite measuring up.[1] The sole modern book-length study of Tannahill, Jim Ferguson's 2011 doctoral thesis, remains unpublished.[2] Clearly, Fred Freeman is right: systematic attention to Tannahill is overdue. The *Complete Songs* project points the way towards future publications that could give the poet's life and work more sustained critical attention.

Unlike his great contemporary, Tannahill was not upwardly socially mobile. He is known to have written on a board positioned beside his loom, breaking off to write as lyrics occurred to him.[3] Both poets, however, wrote their best verse while moving. Burns legendarily went walking, or rocked in his chair, until the rhythms clarified; the walks Tannahill took in the countryside after work – exercise

[1] Christopher A. Whatley, '"It is said that Burns was a radical": Contest, concession, and the political legacy of Robert Burns, ca.1796–1859.' *The Journal of British Studies* 50, no.2 (2011): 639–666.
[2] Jim Ferguson, 'A Weaver in Wartime: a biographical study and the letters of Paisley weaver poet Robert Tannahill (1774–1810).' (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2011). http://theses.gla.ac.uk/2395/.
[3] Robert Tannahill, *Complete Songs and Poems of Robert Tannahill, with Life and Notes* (Paisley: William Wilson, 1877): iii–iv.

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that no doubt boosted his creativity – can mostly still be experienced today. Like Burns, Tannahill had a social conscience, and Tannahill's was firmly rooted in the social realities of his hometown, Paisley. Bringing Tannahill's songs together allows a more systematic consideration of his working-class contribution to Scottish song tradition, while decisions made by the project, particularly in the later CDs, to perform songs using international musical styles and instruments imply that these topics of wider human interest are still relevant today.

Robert Tannahill remained a local hero in Paisley, where his poetry was steeped in references to local landscape and social history. The tragic circumstances of his death – he drowned himself in 1810 when a second volume of poetry failed to find a publisher – may have obscured his memory for a time, but his songs gradually found a wider popular audience in chapbooks and anthologies targeting the popular end of the domestic song market. From the middle of the nineteenth century, press reports in Paisley helped build support for proposals for a statue in his memory.[4] One was finally erected in 1883, not quite in time for his centenary,[5] thanks to public contributions raised by large crowds which would gather in the woods on the edge of Paisley to sing his songs.[6]

Owing to the lack of modern scholarly attention to the poet, the Tannahill recording project has needed to overcome a lack of authoritative sources for both lyrics and tunes. Robert Burns was an able social networker whose partnerships with music publishers ensured his songs were quickly associated with a large repertoire of published melodies after his death. Tannahill, on the other hand, was a much quieter man. He only published one book in his own lifetime: a dramatic interlude flanked by poems and song lyrics.[7] Limited runs of further editions appeared, particularly one in 1815 that fed forward into anthologies by other authors, but no further volume of new poems.[8] While some of his songs have survived with headnotes naming suitable pre-existing tunes, many lack such information. Others were set to new tunes, as Tannahill had several musical acquaintances who arranged his lyrics for piano – principally, Robert Archibald Smith, who published a multi-volume anthology of piano arrangements some years after Tannahill's death.[9] As the nineteenth century progressed, Tannahill's songs travelled beyond Paisley in a range of printed formats, including cheaply-produced chapbooks which neither named the poet nor included tunes, and anthologies of national song with piano accompaniments, in which Tannahill's compositions may have been altered to suit the fashion of the day.[10] The first attempt at systematic curation of the poet's work was that of David Semple in 1876, and it also may have some errors in attribution.[11]

Understandably, Freeman needed to make many editorial decisions in the course of this project, not least of which was to identify which songs were composed by Tannahill and which were not. Liner notes do provide some information about where verses have been edited to make them more singable, where stanzas have been deleted, and where stanzas authored by people other than Tannahill have been left in. Nonetheless, I found myself wishing that the critical apparatus included a stronger sense of which sources had been tapped for both lyrics and tunes. It would have been easy to insert the names of known tunes into the liner notes (as Tannahill did in his book) rather than just to say,

[4] 'The Anniversary of Robert Tannahill', *The Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, Saturday 5 June 1858: 3.

[5] 'The Tannahill Statue at Paisley', *The Illustrated London News*, Saturday 17 November 1883: 24.

[6] Ferguson, 'A Weaver in Wartime', 1.

[7] Robert Tannahill, *The Soldier's Return: A Scottish Interlude in Two Acts, with other Poems and Songs Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect'* (Paisley, 1807).

[8] Robert Tannahill, *Poems and Songs Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect.* 3rd edition. (Paisley: Crighton, 1815).

[9] Robert Archibald Smith, *The Scotish Minstrel: a selection from the vocal melodies of Scotland, ancient and modern, arranged for the pianoforte.* 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Robert Purdie, 1820–24).

[10] Iain Beavan, 'Chapbooks, Cheap Print, Burns and Tannahill in the Nineteenth Century.' *Scottish Literary Review* 11, no. 2: 2019: 59.

[11] Robert Tannahill, *The Poems and Songs and Correspondence of Robert Tannahill, with Life and Notes by David Semple* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1876).

'traditional tune'. Where a melody was either not named in the sources or has been lost, Freeman has seized an opportunity to innovate within the tradition by composing a new tune, which may have been altered in rehearsal by participating musicians (although Freeman does not say as much).

In Japan, there is a tradition, called Kintsugi, of mending broken vessels by building up new lacquer and infilling the joins with precious metal – a process that highlights the once-broken areas and acknowledges the role of the craftsperson who recovers the artifact. The aesthetic respects the discontinuities, accepting that change, loss, and renewal all contribute to a living tradition. In the case of the Tannahill project, it could be argued that those moments when the join between old and new may seem particularly idiosyncratic represent a musical equivalent of Kintsugi: the recordings show the joints between the contemporary musicians' imaginations and Tannahill's, rather than trying to reproduce the songs as they might have been heard in 1810.

Freeman describes this approach in his liner notes as 'doing justice' to Tannahill, making his songs feel fresh to modern ears. We might, however, wish that Freeman had written in greater detail about the techniques, materials and tools used in the repair shed. His project would have benefited greatly from a critical apparatus that a) identified the sources of the lyrics, including variants and songs with multiple authors; b) named the original tunes, as well as any printed sources that may have been in circulation before Tannahill's time; and c) reflected upon the process involved in the composition of new tunes, explaining what inspired them, and describing how creative decisions were made. Further detail would also have given singers wishing to develop their own performances of this repertoire a more robust understanding of the sources. Tannahill's lyrics work better in the ears than on the page, and the same may be said of Freeman's notes, which often feel like a lecture accompanying a performance, guiding the listener to the distinctive aural features in Tannahill's verse that, as Freeman argues, reflect not only the dance rhythms of Scotland's jigs, reels and strathspeys but also the poet's embodied knowledge of daily life in Scotland.[12]

While not all traditional musicians, scholars, or enthusiasts will agree with Freeman's approach to traditional music, his project does respond to what many in the target audience want. Since the 1980s, it has become increasingly common to hear traditional music fused with jazz, rock, classical, and other musical genres. Musician-academic Lori Watson has described this as a 'New Traditional School' of composition and performance, one that intentionally seeks to use repertoire that has had 'a significant life in oral tradition' as a basis for new material.[13] Reviews of Freeman's early Tannahill CDs in *The Living Tradition* encouraged the fusion of the traditional with the contemporary. One reviewer, David Kidman, characterised volume 2 as 'modern scholarship at its best, but there's not a whiff of undue academe about the exercise'.[14] Jim McCourt praised volume 3 as having struck 'a balance…between authenticity and a contemporary presentation'.[15] Matthew Shaw, writing more critically of volume 3, suggested that 'there is sometimes the problem of too much being respect paid to the original work'.[16] Freeman's awareness of such comments may explain why volumes 4 and 5 include more radical musical re-packaging, some of which, to my conservative ears, is not entirely successful. While the later CDs include more material that survives in fragmentary form and where

[12] Freeman has made similar arguments for Burns' distinctively Scottish aural imagination; see his extraordinary 13-CD marathon, *Robert Burns: The Complete Songs, Volumes 1–12*, Linn Records, 1996–2002.

[13] Lori Watson, 'The New Traditional School in Scotland: Innovation, beyond-tune composition and a traditional musician's creative practice.' (PhD diss., Royal Conservatoire of Scotland / University of St Andrews, 2012), 36.

[14] David Kidman, review of 'The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill Volume 2.' *The Living Tradition* 85 2010. https://www.livingtradition.co.uk/webrevs/cdbar010.htm, accessed 16 May 2024.

[15] Jim McCourt, review of 'The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill, Volume III', *The Living Tradition* 96, 2013: 49. https://www.livingtradition.co.uk/webrevs/cdbar017.htm, accessed 16 May 2024.

[16] Matthew Shaw, review of 'The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill Volume 3', *Is this Music? Independent Sounds from Scotland*, 21 March 2013. https://www.isthismusic.com/the-complete-songs-of-robert-tannahill, accessed 16 May 2024.

more radical reconstruction has been inevitable, musical recordings also need to meet their audience's expectations, and a project spanning eighteen years has had to deal with how those expectations may have changed over that time.

Listening to Tannahill's *Complete Songs:* Minding the gaps

The *Complete Songs* project sensibly avoids bundling the material in chronological order. Altogether, the project delivers ninety-five songs across the five albums, with each volume containing a variety of themes so that any one on its own could provide a listener with an overview of Tannahill's themes and styles. All the CDs except the last include a recitation of one of Tannahill's poems by Freeman. While it is hard not to hear in all the discs a movement towards sorrow and disillusionment that to an extent reflects the sadness that haunted the end of Tannahill's life, there are also moments of joy, not least in the quality of the musical performances.

The first four CDs take their titles from the name of a well-known pastoral love song. In sequence, these are: 'The Braes O Balquhidder' – the song that inspired Francis McPeake's 1950s variant 'Wild Mountain Thyme' (CD 1, track 4); 'Gloomy Winter's Noo Awa', the song that memorably featured in the 1993 film *The Piano* in Michael Nymen's minimalist arrangement of the tune 'Lord Balgonie's Favourite' (CD 2, track 2); 'The Braes O Gleniffer', a lament sung by a woman whose lover has gone to war (CD 3, track 2); and 'The Bonnie Wood O Craigielea' (CD 4, track 1). Volume five, recorded by a different studio, also leads with a song of rural romance: 'The Kebbuckston Weddin'' (CD 5, track 1), a rollicking jig. Each of these five songs may be taken as an illustration of Freeman's method in combining the old with the new.

'The Braes O Balquhidder' (CD 1) is performed with unabashedly modern instruments, including conga drums, in a fusion style that combines tradition with jazz harmonies and a soft-rock driven beat. The accompaniment quotes from Francis McPeake's melody before settling on a vocal delivered fluently by John Croall. I think what I heard was an arrangement of the tune 'The Braes of Balwhither', a slow strathspey that appears in several printed collections roughly contemporary with Tannahill, including Robert Petrie's *Third Collection of Strathspey Reels*.[17] In the first volume of his *Scotish Minstrel*, R. A. Smith set Tannahill's text to this strathspey, which he renamed 'The Braes o' Balquhidder'.[18] However, several editions of Tannahill's poetry show that the melody he originally imagined for this song was called 'The Three Carles o' Buchanan'.[19] What we hear, therefore, is a received tradition of performance mediated by the interaction of both printed anthology and oral practice, rather than Tannahill's initial choice of 'The Three Carles o' Buchanan'.

'Gloomy Winter's Noo Awa' (CD 2) is sung exquisitely by Emily Smith, accompanied on the piano by Angus Lyon, to the tune 'Lord Balgonie's Favourite'. The focus on the piano may well be a nod to the 1993 film. This is traditional music fused with a classical piano tradition, updated with an awareness of spare modern minimalism. The arrangement opens with what sounds like a pianist improvising in a 'romantic drawing room' style, the performers allowing us to hear an improvisation that takes us into the space. In acknowledging both the song's nineteenth-century roots and its contemporary resonance, this performance creates a good balance between past and present.

'The Braes O Gleniffer' (CD3) also has a female vocal, beautifully sung by Fiona Hunter, ably accompanied by Chris Agnew on acoustic bass, Marc Duff on recorder and bouzouki, Angus Lyon on melodeon, and Chris Wright on guitar. Various nineteenth-century anthologies and chapbooks give Tannahill's song with a headnote reference to the tune 'Bonnie Dundee'.[20] This is not – wisely – the tune sung on the recording. While 'Bonnie Dundee' might reflect the back-story of battle (the song is

[17] Robert Petrie, *Third Collection of Strathspey Reels* (London, 1802), 9.

[18] Smith, *The Scotish Minstrel*, vol. 1, 49.

[19] E.g., Tannahill, *The Poems and Songs and Correspondence,* 237.

[20] E.g., the chapbook *Mary's Dream, to which are added, Mine ain dear Somebody, The Braes o' Gleniffer, The Braes of Balquhither, Loudon's bonny Woods and Braes, The Disguised Squire*. Paisley: J Neilson, 1812, 3.

about a woman whose lover has marched off to war), its upbeat martial character does not suit the plangent meaning of the lyric. Alexander Whitelaw's *Book of Scottish Song* (1834) suggests that John Ross of Aberdeen composed a different tune to Tannahill's poem.[21] Tapping the notes into various online apps suggested that the slow jig I was hearing sounded a bit like the Irish tune 'The Blarney Pilgrim', which may be well wide of the mark, but does pick up on a strand of Scots-Irish engagement that runs through the *Complete Songs* project, about which we shall more to say presently.[22] It may be that proper folkies will find the source tune obvious, but since this project is an exercise in historical recovery, helping the less expert listener catch up would be very much appreciated.

'The Bonnie Wood of Cragielea' (CD 4) appeared in the centenary anthology of Tannahill's book with a fully notated tune.[23] This is not, however, the tune used for the recording. In his liner note, Freeman explains that the instrumental music on this track uses a new tune, 'adapted and composed' by himself, that was inspired by a Russian folk tune previously adapted by Stravinsky. Why this tune was used, and where it appears in Stravinsky's work (his 1918 *Histoire du Soldat*, perhaps?), is not explained. The tune used for the vocal, however, is adapted from a tune called 'Thou Bonnie Wood of Craigie-lea', attributed in G. F. Graham's 1848 anthology, the *Songs of Scotland,* to Tannahill's friend James Barr, who afterwards emigrated to America.[24] The poetic voice expresses anguish at needing to leave the idyllic landscape of youth, being 'dragged' overseas for obscure reasons – if not necessarily Barr's autobiography, then plausibly a reference to the Highland Clearances. As in volumes 2 and 3, this key-note song is sung by a female singer, Claire Hastings, lightly accompanied by Aaron Jones on cittern and Chris Agnew on acoustic bass. It may be that the interaction of Barr's tune with a Russian folk tune is meant to suggest common ground between Scottish emigration and emigration from Russia. Live performance might allow a spoken introduction that could make that connection more present than it was from the recording alone.

The fifth and final CD opens cheerily with 'The Kebbuckston Weddin' – a lively jig played in a distinctly Irish style with whistle and bodhrán. While Tannahill's published centenary anthology tells us that his lyric was composed to 'an ancient Highland Air', the liner notes to this CD say nothing about the tune at all, leaving the listener in the dark about its origins. Despite the liveliness of this opening track, the unfolding of tracks on this disc speak to a melancholia that haunts both this CD and the project as a whole.

Many of the songs in this fifth volume are built upon fragmentary lyrics, some of which are too short or incomplete for a satisfactory song. For these, Freeman has adopted the interesting approach of creating composite settings. Track 6, for example, combines 'Contentment', 'Away Gloomy Care', and 'Sing on thou Sweet Warbler' into a medley, pleasantly sung by Claire Hastings, that initially sounds like a conventional pastoral love song. In the final verse, however, the mood darkens with a reference to drowning, raising questions about what seemed to be benign references to 'streamlets' in previous lines, and reminding listeners of the poet's unhappy death. Other tracks in this volume include a concentration of military songs, drinking songs both cheerful ('The Coggie', track 11) and cheerless (the final song), and a bleak lament (track 13) that oddly combines 'The Negro Girl', a song about an enslaved African girl, with 'The Poor Maniac's Song'. This final CD contains nineteen tracks in all, one fewer than each of the others; Fred Freeman's normal pattern of reciting a poem is also broken in this last volume. Should we infer a legacy 'to be continued', or something prematurely ended?

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[21] Alexander Whitelaw, ed., *The Book of Scottish Song, Collected and Illustrated with Historical and Critical Notices* (London: Blackie and Son, 1843), 156.

[22] Fred Freeman, 'The Tannahill Irish Songs.', *Béaloideas: The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society* 86 (2018), 75–97.

[23] Tannahill, *The Complete Songs and Poems,* 49.

[24] George Farquhar Graham, *The Songs of Scotland Adapted to their Appropriate Melodies,* Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Wood and Co, 1854), 126–7.

Whatever the subtexts, the *Complete Songs* ends with a fine performance. Cameron Nixon, the last voice we hear, is an emerging new star. Nixon's voice carries this final CD, leading the vocals in 'The Harper of Mull' (track 3), in two songs about soldiering (track 7, 'The Defeat of the French', and track 10, 'The Soldier's Funeral'), and in the paired songs about slavery and madness (track 13). There is a graininess in his voice that conveys tremendous expressive tension in these contexts. He sings the final song, 'Why Unite to Banish Care', unaccompanied, with harrowing bleakness, to the battle tune 'Hey Tuttie Tatie', Freeman's choice of melody. This is a grimly nihilistic counterblast to the optimism of Robert Burns, who set the same tune to the rallying cry of Bruce on the eve of Bannockburn. For Tannahill, there is no promise of final victory:

> Come, thou proud though needy bard
> Starving midst a world's regard
> Double blest our cup shall flow
> It sooths a brother's woe.

These are the last words sung on the *Complete Songs* project. The point about underappreciated genius is clear. I found myself wishing for a happier ending. But then again, so did Tannahill. May future singers of Tannahill grasp the flashes of joy, briefly flaring like a leaping salmon upstream against the currents of deep sadness.

Hearing Tannahill's *Complete Songs:* Radical themes

If Tannahill were simply the poet of his own disappointment, there would be little reputation to revive. However, his vision is wider than his own sorrows. Freeman's notes draw our attention to songs about itinerant labourers from Ireland and the Highlands, the traumatic impact of the Napoleonic wars on both soldiers and their families; and although I have doubts whether the experiment of combining songs of enslavement and madness into one (CD 5, track 13) is entirely successful, there is empathy there, too. While Tannahill's nineteenth century reputation as a 'pastoral' poet is legitimate, this was rough pastoral, attentive to working class realities. Tannahill's experience as a weaver both in Paisley and, for a brief period, in Lancashire, gave him a distinctive working-class insight into the imbalances of power and capital that the industrial revolution was making so evident. Freeman rightly suggests that Tannahill would have had much to say to twentieth-century internationalist folk scholar, singer and poet Hamish Henderson.

The fifth and final volume demonstrates Tannahill's radical realism particularly strongly. The realities of revolutionary war are explored from a variety of angles: 'The Defeat of the French' (track 7) is grimly patriotic (Tannahill knew local men who had willingly served in the British army fighting Napoleon); 'The Disabled Seaman' (track 8) and 'The Soldier's Funeral' (track 10) show the cost of victory.

Other songs connect with the realities of working life. Freeman encourages us to listen for the alliterative w's in 'The Flower of Levern Side' (CD5, track 2) which suggest, he says, 'the heavy breathing of a totally knackered farm worker'.[25] A research article might compare the impact of Tannahill's realist lyrics with the approach to similar subjects taken by some of his wealthier contemporaries. His 'Caller Herrin' girl, for example, is a good bit less winsome than Lady Nairne's similarly titled representation of Newhaven fisher women. In this song, vigorously sung by John Moran (CD 5, track 16), Tannahill instead imagines a rather abusive and dismissive male client rejecting whatever wares are on offer down a gut-strewn alley.

A feature of the *Complete Songs* project is that many of the tunes are not simply 'Scottish' but reflect melodies shared across the Irish sea – an appropriate choice, given the poet's sustained interest in the plight of itinerant Irish Catholic labourers. Emigrating to western Scotland in large numbers following the 1798 rebellion and the 1801 Act of Union in Ireland, these men endured bitter racist and sectarian discrimination. Despite his Presbyterianism and the potential impact of immigrant

[25] Fred Freeman, Liner Note, *Volume CCL: A 250th Anniversary Tribute* (Duende Records, 2024), 8.

labour on a weaver's wages, Tannahill recognised the human pain of homesickness and loss in these people's experiences. It is entirely fitting that songs touching on the plight of these immigrant Irishmen are well represented in the *Collected Songs*, particularly so in volumes 2–4.

In volume 2, songs such as 'One Night in My Youth' and 'Peggy O'Rafferty (CD 2, tracks 3 and 13) demonstrate Tannahill's empathy with wandering Irishmen far from home, missing the girls left behind in the old country. In volume 3, 'Ye Friendly Stars that Rule the Night' (CD 3, track 3) and 'Adieu! Ye Cheerful Native Plains' (CD 3, track 4) also express their sense of exile and lost loves, while 'Irish Teaching' (CD 3, track 13) imagines a father hoping that his children will be literate, and 'The Dirge of Carolan' (CD 3, track 16) connects with the stories of Ossian shared between Gaelic Scotland and Ireland. Volume 4 returns to the theme of lost loves with 'Shelah, My Darling' (CD 4, track 4); 'The Irish Farmer' (CD 4, track 16) imagines an Irishman discussing the joys of a small-holding with his wife, Judy; 'Green Inismore' (CD 4, track 18) imagines an Irish soldier returning home; and 'Awake my harp' (CD 4, track 13) is virtually an Irish anthem. The extent of this Irish material is remarkable. Although Tannahill also wrote songs reflecting Scottish Jacobite histories of exile, he successfully managed to update and apply the trope to the Irish reality. Freeman's exploration of these songs particularly benefits from his choosing musicians with experience of the Irish folk idiom, notably singer Brian Ó hEadhra on volumes 2–4, and instrumentalist Marc Duff, who appears on all five volumes.

Freeman's thesis is that Tannahill's relevance is not simply local, limited to Paisley, but is to an extent universal. Reflecting this argument, the *Complete Songs* project uses musically eclectic styles that go beyond the identifiably Scots-Irish in an effort to make the claim for the poet's universality audible. Volume 1, for example, includes 'Fly We to Some Desert Isle', sung in a recognisably modern international Celtic idiom by Emily Smith, accompanied by harps and recorders – a performance that evokes what has become a familiar folkish fantasia using haunting, minimalist chords. In this first CD, however, melodies obviously based on the traditional repertoire also undergo cross-fertilisation from less likely idioms. As we noted earlier, the accompaniment to 'The Braes O Balquhidder' (CD 1, track 4) creates a jazzy effect with its use of congas and diminished chords. In many cases, such experimentation results in a convincing fusion of older and newer influences. I particularly enjoyed the moments of creative wit that enlivened some of these earlier-recorded songs, like 'The Simmer Gloamin'' (a lyric about midges), set to a tune called 'Anya's Dance', composed by Freeman for Angus Lyon's daughter Anya, which allows the box player to make midge noises (CD 2, track 6).

By the time we reach volumes 4 and 5, however, the eclecticism at times seems more eccentric, and without the storytelling in live performance that might prepare the listener for what's to come, not all of the songs entirely work. I found the recurrent use of Klezmer style in, for example, 'Killoch Burn' (CD 4, track 8), 'O Laddie Can Ye Lea Me' (CD 4, track 12), and 'The Harper o' Mull' (CD 5, track 3) particularly questionable, given that these songs are disparate in content: the woes of a neglected country poet, of an abandoned woman, and of a lovelorn bard. Had the technique been used to suggest a common experience of emigration shared by Jewish people and Highland Scots, it might have had bite. However, applied as a top-level skim of 'sadness' it is less persuasive, striking this listener as little more than a nod to a contemporary fashionable sound.

A few tracks with new music sounded slightly dated or directionless, and one was just plain peculiar. 'Marjorie Miller' (CD 5, track 9), links a lyric about a stentorian female millworker with the polite drawing room sounds of recorder, mandolin and guitar performing newly-composed melodic material that had a nursery simplicity. A set of studio albums, ultimately, is not quite the same as a live performance, in which a bit of explanatory banter might bridge the performer-audience gap. In this particular bit of mended vase, the metal in the joins felt more like lead than gold.

Building Community in *The Complete Songs of Robert Tannahill*

Despite his final depression and tragic death, Tannahill was a sociable man amongst friends. As various biographical notes about him attest, he was instrumental in setting up Paisley's first Burns

Club, contributed regularly to meetings of local working-men's literary associations, and was a founding member of a Paisley working men's lending library.[26] Fittingly, the most impressive thing about the *Complete Songs* project is the project management involved in building a community of musicians with a shared experience of performing these songs, combining both experienced performers with talented newcomers. Many of those named previously contributed to the *Complete Songs of Robert Burns* recordings, which is also fitting, as Robert Burns' legacy helped to inspire Tannahill's early writing career.

To understand the scale of this achievement, details matter. Some forty-three musicians receive credit in the liner notes, including the sound engineers who must be counted as full partners in the creative process. Long service medals go to percussionist Marc Duff and guitarist Frank McLaughlin, both of whom ran the entire course alongside Fred Freeman. Beyond them, the list reveals a network with wide and deep roots in the contemporary Scottish traditional music scene. Singers include John Croall, Claire Hastings, Fiona Hunter, Nick Keir, Ross Kennedy, Marieke McBean, Gillian McDonald, Cameron Nixon, Brian Ó hEadra, Rod Paterson, Lucy Pringle, Jim Reid, and Emily Smith (whose contributions to discs 1 and 2 are a personal favourite). Instrumentalists include Chris Agnew, Phil Alexander, Ian Anderson and Jim Malcolm (both also singers), Sandy Brechin, Adam Bulley, Mark Black, Steve Byrne (another singer-guitarist), Marc Duff, Mark Dunlop, Stewart Hardy, Corrina Hewat, Aaron Jones, Stevie Lawrence, Angus Lyon (a marvellously sensitive accompanist of solo voice), Alasdair MacLeod, Chas MacKenzie, John Martin, Anna Massie, Pat McGarvey, Euan McLaughlin, Frank McLaughlin, John Morran (yet another singer-guitarist), Rod Paul, cellist-singer Wendy Weatherby, Chris Wright, and Mike Vass. The contribution of sound engineers Richard Werner (CDs 1–4, also player of unusual percussion) and Marty Haily (CD 5) is also creatively important, and all liner notes thank a range of others who have supported and given advice along the way. Two – Jim Reid and Nick Keir – died before the project was concluded, and are commemorated in dedications to discs 2 and 4. The change of record labels suggests that the journey has at times been hard, but Freeman and his musicians can be proud of what has been achieved.

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Reviews

Derick Thomson and the Gaelic Revival. **Petra Johana Poncarová. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023. Pp. 208. ISBN (hardback) 9781399501194.**

Derick Thomson and the 'Gaelic Revival' of the second half of the twentieth century are synonymous concepts. That Derick Thomson (1921–2012) existed, I can attest from personal experience, despite his efforts being superhuman; more on that anon. That the 'Gaelic Revival' existed, I am not quite so sure. As Petra Johana Poncarová is careful to point out, while Thomson spent these fifty years almost single-handedly building up national institutions and national esteem for Gaelic, the living language spent these fifty years slowly going down the drain. In 1951 there were 95,447 speakers, and in 2001 there were 58,652 – less than the present capacity of Murrayfield Stadium, though a bit more than Hampden Park. Apparently Derick wrote in 1976, with typical enthusiasm, that 'it is possible now to predict that the revival is only in its early stages, and will continue strongly for the remaining quarter of the century', and that there could be 'little doubt now that the figures of Gaelic speakers will by then have surged well over the 100,000 mark'. Oh dear. Can the sinking of the *Titanic* be called a 'revival' simply because a certain organisational genius got all available ships to steam in the right direction?

So far I have referred familiarly to 'Derick' and formally to 'Thomson'. From now on I will compromise by calling him DST, which was quite usual in his day. It is appropriate for a man whom I knew well, but whom I always addressed as *sibh*. Indeed if I may be personal for a paragraph, I first met him when I was still wearing my school uniform, and he was in his first year as Professor of Celtic in Glasgow University. To say that he was a formative influence is an understatement. At that point I was uncertain whether to pursue a degree in German or in Celtic, as my German and Gaelic teachers at school had been outstanding. I soon made up my mind. The teaching of German at the university proved to be poor. In contrast, the teaching of Celtic, under DST, Kenneth MacDonald, Donald Howells and (later) Donald John MacLeod, was inspiring. DST became a second father in my imagination, although he would have been horrified to know it, as he must have seen too little of his own six children as it was – in fact, one wonders if he ever slept. As with a parent's influence, I have gone through life unsure whether my beliefs and interests are truly my own or really his, and I have felt a sense of daring when deviating from them. If Cotrìona Mhór, the cleaner in his father's school, was the key to his museum (*iuchair mo mhuseum*), as he put it in a poem once, he himself is certainly mine.

DST possessed a curious gift. He had a quiet way of speaking, a whisper almost, but he was a big man, and such was his force of personality that any audience would fall silent to hear him. All eyes would be fixed on his face – he blinked constantly, so even when standing still, his countenance was in constant motion. One could almost hear the buzz of an agile brain behind those blinking eyes.

Derick Thomson and the Gaelic Revival is an excellent piece of work. In six chapters, it introduces us to the Gaelic language, to Scottish Nationalism, to DST's life and work, and to the institutions and events that provided the context for these, or were created by them. Chapter 1 consists mainly of an interesting biography of DST, including (in a footnote) this quote by himself: "My father and mother habitually spoke in Gaelic to each other, but frequently enough spoke English to each other also, without any sense of strain. They had decided to make English my first language, though Gaelic had been my elder brother's. I think this was a carefully worked-out policy, for we were in the midst of an almost totally Gaelic environment, and they reckoned Gaelic would come easily." This calculated linguistic policy of his childhood home and hearth speaks volumes about his later life.

But to continue. Chapter 2 provides background on the history of Gaelic and the Scottish independence movement, and summarises DST's opinions on these. It makes thoughtful comparisons with Ruaraidh Erskine of Mar and Hugh MacDiarmid, and explores DST's engagement with the languages of Ireland and Wales. Chapter 3 is a study of *Gairm*, the periodical which he founded (with

Finlay J. MacDonald) in 1952 and edited until 2002. Chapter 4 considers his scholarly output where it touches on Gaelic revival – meaning especially Ossian, Mac Mhaighstir Alastair, *An Introduction to Gaelic Poetry* and *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland*. Chapter 5 is a fascinating study of how the thread of Gaelic revival can be traced through his seven poetry collections, taking them one at a time; also through his short stories. And Chapter 6 summarises his legacy.

What then is DST's legacy? Poncarová quotes Donald Meek, who said of DST's vision: "It is not too much to say that that vision made Gaelic what it is today, with its numerous means of enlightened support, but it also went some way to making Scotland what it is today." He added that those engaged in Gaelic revitalisation efforts nowadays are 'by and large, doing no more than finessing the templates which Derick Thomson and his team created all those years ago'.

Another way to look at DST's legacy is to ask what the Gaelic world would look like today had there been no *Gairm*, no Gairm Publications, and none of DST's poetry. Also, would some other visionary have founded the Gaelic Books Council and provided the impetus that has led to Bord na Gàidhlig, BBC Alba, Gaelic place-names along our roads, and now-familiar signage like 'POILEAS', 'AMBAILEANS' and 'PÀRLAMAID NA H-ALBA'? I suspect that the answer is no, because Thomson was unique, and had made a series of decisions about his life which he stuck to through thick and thin. Unlike his father or Sorley MacLean, he decided not to live and work in a Gaelic-speaking area. He wanted to be close to the levers of power, and had the kind of ambition that is normal in politics and business. His ambition, however, was devoted not to achieving power or making money, but to reviving the Gaelic language. Poncarová says: 'SNP politicians Winnie Ewing and Billy Wolfe asked him to stand for the party as a candidate, but Thomson refused, believing he would make a more productive contribution to Scotland as an academic.' To put this another way, he believed passionately in making people's lives better, but also, rightly in my view, that the way to do that was to help them maintain or revive their use of the Gaelic language. In any case, SNP victories in those days were rare and ephemeral (despite being leader of the SNP, Billy Wolfe never won a seat, though he stood for one seven times). In negotiating for funds DST was tenacious, and usually successful; indeed, the Principal of Glasgow University described him to me once as 'difficult'. And he was difficult. Twice he had a co-editor on *Gairm*; twice they left.

I recall DST making a speech on some public occasion or other. He urged people in the islands who had a choice of garages to bring their car to the one where Gaelic was spoken. It sounded rather odd. Perhaps it was a metaphor.

In fact, Poncarová's 'Legacy' chapter is not so much about legacy as about aftermath. The word 'disappointment' is to the fore. Under the sub-heading 'Gaelic and Scottish nationalism', she fails to say how pleased he must have been about the SNP coming to power in 2007, but records his disappointment that Gaelic development has formed no part of its agenda. The results of the 2014 and 2016 referenda would have come as 'a severe blow' (her words), because he was a convinced European as well as a Nationalist. DST would also have been disappointed, she says, at the Government's failure in 2014 to produce 'a Gaelic version of the ballot paper' for the 2014 referendum. Too true. At the time, I pointed out in *The Scotsman* that all ballot-papers should be bilingual, while recognising the possibility of a backlash that could be detrimental to the independence movement, given the 'No' side's stranglehold on the media. I was particularly taken aback by the stance of the leader of the Liberal Democrats, Tavish Scott, which was that if Gaelic speakers wanted Gaelic on the ballot-paper they should fight for it – despite the fact that Scott himself had voted for the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act of 2005, which gave Gaelic and English 'parity of esteem'.

Another point here needs to be clarified and updated. Poncarová says that 'substantial steps, like establishing a dedicated ministerial position for Scotland's languages,' remain to be taken by government, and Kate Forbes is mentioned in a footnote. What does 'dedicated' mean? There has long been a minister for Gaelic, the most active having been Brian Wilson (Labour) in 1997–99, before responsibility for the language was devolved. But Gaelic ministers are always something else as well, and it has been remarked that the last one, SNP education secretary Jenny Gilruth, 'probably

didn't know she was Gaelic minister'. The latest one is Kate Forbes herself; she certainly knows that she is Gaelic minister, but she also happens to be Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for the Economy. How dedicated is dedicated?

Under 'Gaelic periodicals and media after *Gairm*', Poncarová points out that DST chose to close *Gairm* down rather than passing it on to another editor. She might have added that even when *Gath* was founded as its successor, he failed to pass on his 800-strong list of subscribers. But then, when over 80, difficult people can become even more difficult.

Under 'Scholarship, translations, organisational work' Poncarová remarks that no comparable figure has emerged. She muses that for structural reasons, 'the time of the polymath activists like Thomson seems to have passed'. It is certainly true that organised teamwork has taken the place of individual endeavour, but surely the creation of a set of stable organisations was precisely DST's aim – in a word, his legacy. It would be correct to say that all of the organisable enterprises to which Thomson devoted his life are now flourishing.

DST's legacy can equally be viewed in two other ways. One is this. For all his single-minded devotion to the Gaelic cause, the census figures kept tumbling. Everyone knows that no individual could have tried harder. What then is the point of trying to succeed where even DST had failed? That understanding is part of his legacy. He must have been conscious of it when he pulled down the shutters on *Gairm* so emphatically in 2002.

The other is this. As Poncarová makes clear, DST put great faith in national independence as an essential part of the mechanism for reviving Gaelic. Following independence, the theory goes, the national schools curriculum will be revised to make much more room for the language, every child in Scotland will gain an acquaintance with the basics of it at primary level, so in due course no one will be as ignorant of it as the average Scot is today; money will be found to establish a research institute devoted to the language, and a Gaelic cultural institute like the British Council; all in all, successive governments will see monolingualism as abhorrent, and will make every effort to realise Scotland's potential as a successful trilingual country on the European model (as different from England as possible, cynics would say). This is where the word 'disappointment' may be written in capital letters in DST's biography, because he died – as many of his loyal students will surely die – without seeing Scottish independence.

And this, too, is where Poncarová's book scores a bullseye. She begins with a highly relevant personal statement: "As a person brought up in the Czech Republic speaking Czech, my compulsory education featured a great deal of positive discussion of the Czech national revival, which occurred during the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century and connected efforts to revitalise Czech language and create a Czech culture with the endeavour to obtain political emancipation from the Habsburg Empire." The Czech experience becomes a thread that surfaces here and there in the book, most notably in discussing DST's translation of a biology textbook, which I know to have been one of the achievements of which he was most proud. Poncarová quotes the Czech writer Vladimír Macura on the 'strong journalistic and persuasive aspect' of the use of Czech as a language of science during the Czech national revival: "Elevation of Czech to the language of science was a proof of the ability of the Czech language to assume its place among the educated languages of Europe."

In 1954 the editors of *Gairm* complained that they had more readers in Manchester than in Harris. Poncarová ends, appropriately, by saying that it would have amused and gratified DST that *Derick Thomson and the Gaelic Revival* should have emerged from Central Europe, 'thus confirming the international reach and relevance of his work'. DST might have preferred Harris, but Central Europe is a very good second best. The book is well supported by a good bibliography, is well indexed, and is well worth reading.

RONALD BLACK

Before and After Coal: Images and Voices from Scotland's Mining Communities. Exhibition. National Galleries of Scotland: Portrait. 23 March to 15 September 2024.

Figure 1 Commemorating the Miners' Strike Fife, 2024.

The title of this exhibition is explained, in the handsome booklet accompanying the event, as 'reflecting the strength and spirit of towns where families measure time as being "before and after coal"'.[1] The crucial turning point was obviously the major 1984–1985 strike against colliery closures that, forty years on, has a place in this exhibition and is currently being remembered and reflected upon in locations across the country (*Fig. 1*).

The exhibition opens with a series of portrait and landscape photographs made by the American social documentary photographer Milton Rogovin (1909–2011) during a three-week visit to three coalfield communities in Scotland in 1982. This work was to inspire his larger series *The Family of Miners*, featuring mineworkers and their families in ten nations.[2] In 2006 the National Galleries of Scotland received a gift of photographs from the Rogovin family; this was supplemented in 2018 by a further donation of Rogovin's photographs from private collectors.

Rogovin's visit was facilitated by the National Union of Mineworkers; but why he chose, or was steered towards, Scotland rather than coalfields elsewhere in UK is not clear. The subjects of his portraits are anonymous and silent, their precise geographical locations unspecified. The photographs are not posed, but reflect the authentic settings of the people's lives: workplace, home, the local environment. They are shown in everyday situations such as exiting the mine after a shift (Rogovin was not permitted to photograph underground) or engaged in leisure activities.

Portraits of the miners are presented honestly, without the tendency towards romanticised heroic male strength found in some officially endorsed or sponsored photographs of mineworkers from the immediate post-Nationalisation phase and heyday of the industry.[3] In these ways, Rogovin's work is reminiscent of the 'straight photography' of Paul Strand (1890–1976) – some of whose 1954 photographs of South Uist have also been acquired by the National Gallery[4] – and the output of the American social realist photographers. The black-and-white aesthetic appropriately suggests nostalgia and history, situating Rogovin's work within the tradition of photographers who worked in the British coalfields before and after him, including Bill Brandt, fellow Americans Robert Frank and Eugene Smith, Kjell-Ake Andersson of Sweden, John Claridge, Walter Waygood, Ian Beesley, Mick Hodgson, Roger Tiley, Anton Want, David Severn, Martin Pitt, John Cornwell and Michael Kerstgens. Colin Cavers and Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert photographed at Longannet Colliery, Fife, shortly before mining ceased there in 2002.[5]

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[1] Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, *Before and After Coal: Images and Voices from Scotland's Mining Communities*. Exhibition booklet (Edinburgh, 2024).
[2] https://www.miltonrogovin.com/photography-series/family-of-miners-19761987.
[3] Stephanie Ward (2021), 'Miners' Bodies and Masculine Identity in Britain, c.1900-1950', *Cultural and Social History* 18:3, 443-462, *DOI: 10.1080/14780038.2020.1824599*
[4] https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/features/all-roads-lead-scotland-paul-strands-1950s-hebridean-photographs.
[5] https://www.documentscotland.com/photographs-longannet-colliery-scotland/

In several of Rogovin's prints, miners pose proudly with their families in tidy living rooms, often symbolically by the hearth, or relaxing alone or with friends. While the settings are typical of working-class life at the time, we can detect aspects of the older, distinct culture of the mining communities: modest material possessions, popular art prints, sectarian imagery, photographs of Charles and Diana, vegetable gardening, accordion music, rabbiting, keeping ferrets, going to football matches, dancing, walking greyhounds, drinking and having a crack in the community pub, and playing dominoes or darts in the miners' institute or social welfare club. Together they illustrate personal, community and industrial life, the conditions of which are already in transformation, but just on the cusp of unforeseen dramatic change that will alter them forever.

Figure 2 Miners' cottages at East Wemyss, Fife. Milton Rogovin, *Family of Miners, 1982.* National Galleries of Scotland. Gift of David Knaus, 2018. By permission.

The images document places and things, too. Rogovin's studies of a tidy row of vernacular-influenced miners' cottages in East Wemyss (*Fig.2)*, and of the plain salters' and colliers' houses by the eighteenth century Tolbooth on the main street of West Wemyss, Fife, are of a quality and significance worthy of inclusion in the National Monuments Record of Scotland, as are Nicky Bird's recent companion shots of the same streets. Others show utilitarian shops devoid of modern marketing tat (I was delighted to see one shop in Drongan, East Ayrshire, displaying a poster for a forthcoming concert by The Corries, still going strong as a duo in the 1980s) and landscapes long since 'improved' through the Scottish Development Agency's 'land renewal' schemes.

Milton Rogovin's fine photographs share gallery space with the creative outputs of a more recent project they inspired. It was on a visit to the National Gallery of Scotland's print room in 2014 that art worker Nicky Bird became aware of the 1982 photographs and was stimulated to embark on an endeavour of her own. Learning that Rogovin's papers, negatives, contact sheets and a complete set of prints of his Scottish project had been deposited with the Library of Congress in Washington DC, she undertook to survey the material. This led, in turn, to her development of *Mineworkings*, in which she traced Rogovin's steps to the communities he had visited, teased out the names of key individuals, and pieced together an understanding of the photographer's field trip and the relevance of his pictures today.[6]

In the summer of 2023, with financial support from Creative Scotland, Bird set out to identify the subjects of the portraits and collect personal testimony in response to them. With the help of local heritage groups and knowledgeable individuals, she met with members of former mining communities in East Ayrshire, Fife, and Midlothian to share copies of Rogovin's photographs and learn from the people themselves. 'Show and Tell' sessions were advertised in each location, during which members of the community shared personal artefacts – documents, heirlooms, photographs of their own – some of which are included in the exhibition.

Meeting these individuals – including some former miners who had themselves been Rogovin's subjects – inspired Bird to create new images, also included in the exhibition. My personal favourite is the portrait of miner Jim Rutherford at Sorn, East Ayrshire, that is paired with a recent one of him in the same location by Bird. In their use of colour and in their differing format and scale, Bird's

[6] https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/features/images-and-voices-scotlands-mining-communities#mineworkings.

photographs create an immediate contrast with Rogovin's. This is highly appropriate, the chosen media suggesting the new reality 'after coal'.

Individuals' reflections on the mining life as documented by Rogovin in 1982, as well as on the strikes and their aftermath, play a major role in the exhibition. Many of their comments are reflected in the captions accompanying the images and other items displayed. A short 'community engagement project film' entitled *After Burn 2024*, filmed by Edinburgh filmmakers Cagoule TV and available for viewing at the exhibition, features moving testimonies by former miners and their families.[7] The audio tour to the exhibition contextualises six of the photographs in conversations between Nicky Bird, two of Rogovin's daughters, Paula and Linda, his granddaughter Malaika, and members of the former mining communities; it is well worth listening to for the sake of the details warmly conveyed about the lives of these communities at the time of Rogovin's visit.[8] Lastly, Nicky Bird's blog detailing her engagement with this project, as well as her interviews with members of the mining communities, provides a rich resource for anyone interested in Scotland's mining heritage.[9]

Since de-industrialisation, mining communities have been the focus of much oral history research. Glasgow University historian Ewan Gibbs has described the methodological and interpretive challenges of such work, particularly the need to acknowledge the power of collective memory, by which communal experiences come to be 'retold through myth and legend consolidated by family, community and labour connections'.[10] Robin Baillie's observation that contributors to this project often expressed 'memories of a thriving, cohesive, collective life "where everyone was in the same situation"' confirms Gibb's assessment.[11] Because oral testimony will inevitably throw up contradictions and conflicting views and opinions, there is a danger in selectively linking fragments of dialogue to specific images, or using them to suggest a straightforward narrative; indeed, we may wonder if the recollections Baillie mentions were necessarily shared by all.

Even so, those who shared their memories may have wished to stress the tight-knit character of their communities in response to what Baillie calls 'the erosion of working-class identity' since de-industrialisation. Several secondary schools sponsored art projects in which pupils, including the grandchildren of coal miners, were encouraged to decorate miners' workwear and create banners in response to the industrial heritage of their communities. These objects, on display throughout the exhibition, reflect young people's contemporary concerns about social media, drug use, and climate change – a world away from the sense of shared identity and fellowship that the miners and older members of their communities remember, a world unimaginable before coalmining ceased.

For those who missed seeing the exhibit itself, the website provides a wealth of information about the project as a whole and the people who made it possible. The scope and ambition of this exhibition was an excellent initiative. Does it mark a new departure in National Galleries of Scotland's engagement with its customers? In the opening talk,[12] Robin Baillie suggested that the answer to this question may be yes, saying that the involvement of community members in this project has helped the National Galleries 're-evaluate the whole process around exhibition-making', and re-assess 'who we represent, and how we represent them'.

STUART EYDMANN

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[7] https://youtu.be/sW7aWQbAGvI.

[8] https://app.smartify.org/en-GB/tours/before-and-after-coal-audio-tour?tourLanguage=en-GB.

[9] https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/features/images-and-voices-scotlands-mining-communities #mineworkings.

[10] Gibbs, Ewan, *Coal Country: The Meaning and Memory of Deindustrialization in Postwar Scotland* (London: University of London Press), 17.

[11] Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland, *Before and After Coal: Images and Voices from Scotland's Mining Communities*. Exhibition booklet. (Edinburgh, 2024), 21. Baillie is Senior Outreach Officer for the National Galleries of Scotland.

[12] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEoXBzUYIsc.

Beàrnaraigh na Hearadh: 'Tis Fifty Years Since. A Study of Life in a Hebridean Island Community. **Susanne Barding; trans. John Holmes. Balallan, Isle of Lewis: Islands Book Trust, 2023. Pp. 606. Maps; illus. ISBN 9781907443831.**

This book is a time capsule. As a young anthropology student from Copenhagen, Susanne Barding came to Berneray in 1970 to study crofting – she completed her thesis on the island's economic development in 1973 – and ended up studying the islanders, their history, their character and their community at a time of transformative social, economic and linguistic change. In publishing her research fifty years later, she has produced a book that will interest not only anthropologists and scholars, but anyone – islanders, 'ex-isles', summer visitors, incomers – who experienced the Outer Hebrides in the latter part of the twentieth century, as well as those curious about Berneray's recent past. Written in an accessible and engaging style, the work provides a detailed picture of what today is a largely vanished way of life.

The first three chapters trace the history of settlement in Berneray, examine the relationships between clan chiefs, landowners and tenants, and describe the evolution, legalisation, and eventual institutionalisation of what has been called 'the crofting way of life' beginning in the nineteenth century. While all Hebridean islands share similar history, Barding traces specific upheavals in Berneray – famine, clearances, emigration, the collapse of the kelp market, the re-settlement of Borve as a crofting township in 1901 – to show how memory of these events coloured attitudes and relationships among islanders well into the 1970s.

Following this overview, the account becomes personal, as three of Barding's informants speak for themselves: Iain Ferguson (1921–1988) and two of his sisters, Rebecca Ferguson (1928–2011) and Mary (Ferguson) MacAskill (1920–2019), all of Borve township. Barding refers to these three 'life histories' throughout the book, helping readers to grasp the personal ramifications of lives lived in a 'high-context' community in which social roles are determined by birth and gender, and where the need to keep track – of family commitments, of favours owed, of other people's behaviour – is ingrained in its members from childhood. Barding acknowledges the bravery of these informants and others who, in allowing an outsider to record their recollections and use their real names, bucked the norms of a society where personal details and emotions were never publicly discussed. In sharing these stories as well as biographical data and familial relationships of many other individuals, Barding has ensured that those with family roots in Berneray can grasp where their own histories fit into the community matrix she describes.

While these 'life histories' cannot tell the whole story, Barding observes that 'the social construction of the storyteller can be supplemented by social constructions made by the anthropologist' (193). Storytelling is, of course, a well-known aspect of Gaelic culture, and in a later chapter she reminds readers of how the recounting of traditional tales had once commonly occupied the long winter evenings – the ceilidhs described over a century ago by the likes of Alexander Carmichael and J. F. Campbell. By the 1970s, however, the dominant narrative form was the anecdote: a short, often humorous account, usually told by a man, about an adventure (or misadventure) experienced by (usually) another man – often a 'great character' or someone known to the local community.[13] Actual historical events were often fictionalised in ways that aligned with the conventions of more traditional narratives (203). Unlike the hero tales, however, anecdotes very often functioned as a form of social commentary and indirect social control – cautionary tales that, by 'smuggling the social message in through the back door' (201), reinforced the community's values in a manner that avoided embarrassment. But while historical facts often lay behind such stories, Iain Ferguson, a master teller of anecdotes (202–209), was unable to recall anecdotes concerning traumatic events such as evictions, and the author correctly observes that such topics, while often explored in

[13] While she says that women did not generally tell anecdotes, Barding acknowledges that tradition bearer Kate Dix (*Cèit an Tàilleir*), from whom hundreds of items are held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives, was an exception (210, 441). Dix was extensively recorded by the late Ian Paterson, a native of Berneray, who is himself the subject of an article by Liam Alastair Crouse in the present volume of *Scottish Studies.*

Gaelic song and poetry, would likely have been considered unsuitable for 'the humorous storytelling form of the anecdote genre' (212).

Part 3 of the book – comprising over 300 pages of its total length – describes the Berneray communities in extraordinary detail. After placing the island's loss of population – from 524 in 1901 to 131 in the 1970s – in its historical and geographical context, Barding devotes the next several chapters to geography, land use, and material culture: the allocation of communal resources (seaweed, grazing land); the style, construction and maintenance of dwellings; farming practices and livestock management; boats, fishing and navigation; and the other sorts of work (lobster fishing, wool working, and newer economic opportunities) which both crofters and other islanders pursued in order to make ends meet. The fact that Barding is female was itself significant, because while her outsider status rendered her immune to criticism while observing and participating in what would normally be all-male activities, she was also well-placed to explore the lives of women, whose indoor lives could proceed naturally enough in her presence.

An important topic throughout the book is that of balance: the importance of ensuring that one did not aspire to – much less attain – greater prosperity or prominence than one's neighbours. It did not do to stand out. Those who did – the shopkeeper, say, who did not till the land but earned his living from others in the community – got little respect (444). Barding describes one occasion when village men met to appoint members of the grazing committee. Repeated exhortation by the township clerk failed to elicit a single volunteer, so loath were those present to put themselves forward ahead of others. Barding, observing from a seat at the back, describes the scene in keen detail (388–91). This concept, so foreign to those living in 'low-context' environments where nobody cares what you aspire to, actually has a name in Gaelic: *coimhearp*, defined by Fr Allan McDonald as 'an emulation to be no better than my neighbours, a hateful characteristic of many crofters'.[14]

Essential to maintaining this balance was the principle of reciprocity. While romantic notions may have portrayed Hebridean islanders as unfailingly generous and happy to work together for the common good, the situation was more nuanced than it appeared. In 'high-context' communities it is important to keep up and to keep score: when one man does a favour for another, both parties know that the favour will one day be repaid in kind. When communal work requires many hands, someone's absence – even for a good reason – will be noted, and he might get a reputation for slacking off, or for putting his own needs first (444). As Iain Ferguson put it to the author, 'nothing is forgotten' (394) and 'there is nothing like a free gift' (408).

A well-functioning community, particularly one in which economic precarity is a constant threat, relies on a complex network of relationships. The principal network is that of family, and includes not only those who live in the island but those who have left, especially those who have stayed in contact. Being a family member brings obligations that cannot be denied or ignored: Rebecca Ferguson returned to the island from working in Oban when her mother fell ill, because it was expected of her. In Berneray, relationships between the two crofting townships, Borve and Ruisgarry, could be strained, as Ruisgarry felt that some of its arable land had been taken when Borve was resettled in 1900. Church relationships were important, because membership of one or the other congregation – the Church of Scotland and the Free Church – implied different sets of distinctions, particularly regarding interpretations of Scripture and of moral standards (419).

Like codes of reciprocity in secular matters, the acknowledgement of moral codes was fundamental. Transgressing these brought shame, and the fact that one's transgression was discussed behind one's back probably made it worse. Inevitably, women were hypervigilant about matters such as being seen in public: one Borve woman told Barding that when returning home from visiting an aunt in Backhill she preferred to walk across the hills rather than past the houses, for fear that her unescorted presence out-of-doors would provoke gossip (456–7). But while keeping up appearances was essential, the calculation required to do so could wear thin for some: Iain Ferguson told Barding

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[14] Fr Allan McDonald, *Gaelic Words and Expressions from South Uist and Eriskay*, ed. J. L. Campbell (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958), 78.

how he had valued the quality of sincerity in a man he had known, someone who spoke his mind, whose 'opinions were not hidden under layer upon layer of social consideration'. Barding understood that such 'authenticity' had value in a community where 'most social conduct is staged' and one is constantly being judged by others (438).

As modern communications gradually enlarged islanders' field of vision, questions of 'identity' became more important, just as they have done everywhere in our own day. Family identity – one's patrilineal ancestry, its history, and its obligations – had always been essential; but now there were other sorts of identity to be considered. Just as there are discussions today of whether the word 'community' should retain its geographically-bounded meaning or include what Barding calls 'floating networks', the idea of 'identity' must now consider those who choose it as well as those who have inherited it (489–91). Relationships and networks of obligation have had to adapt to acknowledge those who, living away from Berneray, nonetheless identify as members of the island community. As Barding discusses in chapter 16, islanders' nuanced distinction between a 'ceilidh' and a 'visit' perfectly illustrated their response to the increasingly-fluid notion of 'identity' and its implications for their values of hospitality, reciprocity, and balance.

Barding's final chapter examines islanders' traditions, customs and beliefs. She describes how dancing, long prohibited by Free Church, made a comeback around the time of the First World War and continued to allow people to let off steam during her stay in Berneray. She also surveys traditions associated with the 'old new year' – *Oidhche Challuinn* – and other calendar customs, based on accounts shared by her informants. While these are traditions Berneray observed in common with other Hebridean communities, such personal accounts allow us to see past generic descriptions and taste the gaiety of these occasions.

When Barding began her work in the 1970s, academic anthropology had only recently come to approve the study of living communities, to acknowledge that change was constant, and to recognise that communities in the North Atlantic shared much in common (557–8). In the fifty years since, advances in the interpretation of fieldwork like hers undoubtedly helped Barding describe her findings in terms that today's discipline would understand. Her findings, moreover, are remarkable in their depth, her understanding informed by layers of historical study and reinforced by the personal accounts of her informants. In describing her own adventures, she herself demonstrates considerable gifts as a raconteur, her accounts full of keen observation, lively characterisation and telling detail – gifts which must have made her many friends in Berneray. Some Scottish readers may wonder, however, why Barding felt the need to recap well-known historical background, or why comparisons between Gaelic culture and that of the Faroe Islands crop up so often. Others may lament that occasional stanzas of Gaelic poetry are quoted only in translation, or wonder how Barding's understanding of the community might have been more nuanced if she knew Gaelic. We must remind ourselves that this work was first written in Danish, for readers less familiar with Scottish history, unlikely to know any Gaelic, and for whom references to Faroese language and culture might offer a useful touchstone. There is no doubt, however, that her book fulfils what Barding has always considered an important responsibility (559):

> …[T]here was a widespread perception among younger anthropologists that their research result should, one way or the other, be shared with the people who had kindly supplied the information. Ideally you should give something back to 'the field'. I am sorry it took me so long. That is why I have attempted to present my material in the most accessible way possible, such as including descriptions of activities and applying an approach I have chosen to call 'anthropology light'.

Barding's study shows how an outsider's perspective can illuminate details that an emic observer might take for granted. This is a very important work in which both anthropologists and Scottish readers generally will find material to enrich their understanding of a way of life that, for many, remains vividly alive in memory.

VIRGINIA BLANKENHORN

***Jock Duncan – The Man and his Songs: Traditional Songs and Bothy Ballads from the repertoire of Jock Duncan of Fyvie and Pitlochry*. Compiled and edited by Peter Shepheard. Perth: Rymour Books, 2024. Pp. 206. Illus. ISBN 978-1-7394801-7-2.**

Jock Duncan (1925–2021) was the grand old man of the Scots song tradition, expert in the history and performance of bothy ballads and older songs. Pete Shepheard (himself a folksong expert and long-time champion of Jock's singing) has brought together and transcribed sixty of Jock's songs, along with comprehensive notes on their context and background.

The first quarter of the book is edited from Jock's own writings. It's partly an autobiography of his early life and of the local characters he grew up surrounded by. Jock's natural storytelling is heard throughout, whether discussing farming techniques now long superseded, or introducing bothy ballads like 'Bogheid of Asleid' and 'Netherton of Millbrex' long neglected by singers. He finishes with a commentary on the singers he was influenced by and those he sang alongside. This comment, from 1992, is a great snapshot of traditional singing in north-east Scotland at that time (45):

> *I will now go back to Angus to Monnikie, where the famous Davie Glen lived when I knew him in the 60s, Davie competed at the diddling matches, famous in that parts for raising funds for WRI, and consisted of singing – funny and straight songs, diddling tunes in which he held two dolls on strings and made them dance in time. Then there were melodeon and moothie competitions too, followed by telling tall tales, Davie excelled at all, and with his long flowing beard was a fine kenspeckle figure. When he died the diddler matches ceased.*

The rest of the book is all about the songs, with a useful (if slightly intimidating) musicological guide, followed by texts and tunes from Jock's repertoire. These were largely drawn from recordings made in preparation for Jock's debut album 'Ye Shine Whaur Ye Stan!' (Springthyme Records, 1996), as well as from his second album 'Tae the Green Woods Gaen' (Sleepytown Records, 2001) and his appearances at FifeSing – the annual Fife Traditional Singing Weekend of which Pete Shepheard is a longtime organiser.

The sixty songs are presented in alphabetical order by title, and consist mainly of muckle songs, bothy ballads, and 'other' Aberdeenshire songs. 'The Battle of Harlaw', 'Lang Johnnie More' and 'Bonnie Mill Dams o Binnorie' were some of Jock's favourites for traditional singing competitions. The bothy ballads range from 'Rhynie' through to 'Last Trip Home' and include 'The Tradesman's Plooin Match on Hogmanay' – in performance, Jock's most memorable song, in which at every chorus he 'ploughed' his way across the stage, pausing on the endrig to admonish or encourage his horses. By contrast, many of Jock's 'other' Aberdeenshire songs tend to be about ploughing the sea ('Fareweel Tae Tarwathie' and 'The Diamond Ship') or other waterway ('Banks of Inverurie', 'Ythanside', 'Where the Gadie Rins').

The book finishes with song notes, index, and a guide to relevant recordings. Pete's Springthyme Records is known for its excellent liner notes, and he certainly educates and entertains here, combining anecdote and academic reference to fit the songs into the wider tradition. Jock himself was very knowledgeable both about the songs he performed himself and those that other people sang, and there are snippets of his commentary throughout. Jock's comment on "The Barnyards o Delgaty" confirms Shepheard's characterisation of the song as 'a parody of life as it would really have been' (172):

> *There's no way the Barnyards would hae a deen pair of horses. The Barnyards had aye the best pair o horses – a great ferm toun that. And I aye reckon that Drunken Scot, he wisna mairried – that wis his sister, Lang Meg Scot that wis in the hoose.*

The song texts are a great resource for singers and for those wanting to learn about Scots song, and Jock's comments and Pete's song notes make thoroughly enjoyable reading. In 2024, the Folklore Society shortlisted *Jock Duncan – the Man and his Songs* for their Katherine Briggs Award, awarded annually to the book which, in the opinion of the judges, has made the most distinguished contribution

to folklore studies. Although the award itself went elsewhere, this book stands as a deserving tribute to one of our most revered tradition bearers.

SCOTT GARDINER

Memories of Musical Lives: Music and Dance in Personal Music Collections from Australia and New Zealand. **Rosemary Richards and Julja Szuster, eds. Melbourne: Lyrebird Press, 2022. 218+xiii pp. ISBN 9780734037992 (paperback) or 9780734038005 (ebook).**

Music is light and easy to pack when it travels in the memory, or when condensed by hand into a few notebooks of favourite melodies. Edited by two Australian musicologists, the essays in this book explore how Scots and other emigrants recorded the music that was important to them, how it helped them survive the heartache of exile far from home, and how subsequent generations used their musical inheritance, remembered from abroad and recirculated in a new environment, to build mature communities and define an emerging colonial identity. Closer to our own time, these articles provide readers with a sense of what might be at the heart of this 'roots' music for descendants of the Scottish diaspora in post-colonial Australia and New Zealand.

While some of the case studies in this book explore print evidence, it is the account of how emigrants preserved their musical memories in handwritten manuscripts that will be of particular interest to readers of *Scottish Studies*. Manuscript scrapbooking, or 'commonplacing', is not unique to the colonial world. Almut Boehme, Music Curator at the National Library of Scotland, comments in the book's preface that before the arrival of the photocopier, manuscript circulation was a pragmatic solution for sharing music: 'composite volumes allow insights into musical tastes of the owner, musical ability, availability of instruments, and thus music making in the owner's household' (ix). These patterns were not unique to Australia and New Zealand, but perhaps even more necessary in areas far distant from European publishers. This review will focus on those essays that assess what we can learn from the personal libraries of antipodean emigrants of Scottish heritage.

Rosemary Richards' essay, entitled '"Heart, my heart, why so sad?": Two migrants to Melbourne and their manuscript music collections', draws on her doctoral research into the 'home-bound' music albums associated with Georgiana McCrae (1804–1890), illegitimate daughter of George Gordon, Marquis of Huntly.[15] McCrae spent most of her childhood with her mother in London, but was exposed to Scottish music in happy interludes spent with her Gordon relatives as well as during her early adult life in Edinburgh, where she developed a reputation as an accomplished portrait painter. When she left Scotland aged thirty-six with her children to join her husband in Australia, she took with her not only clothes and furniture, but also music books containing handwritten transcriptions of her favourite songs, part of an extensive collection of music books that she eventually compiled and collected in her new home, the McCrae Homestead on the Mornington Peninsula in the state of Victoria, now a site run by the Australian National Trust.[16] Scottish music constituted only part of her extensive library, although it is the part that will interest us here.

Comparing McCrae's efforts to reproduce the Scottish drawing-room music-making of her youth with the collection made by another emigrant, Englishman Robert Wrede (1817–1857), Richards shows how both were interested in a similar range of European 'fashionable' music: operas, songs and dance. McCrae's collection is distinctive, however, for revealing her interest in traditional music. One highlight in her library, in an album entitled the 'Chaplin Music Book', is a handwritten copy of a bagpipe lament, originally titled in Gaelic, that she may have encountered in Patrick MacDonald's *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* (1784). McCrae's handwritten version combines this tune with a

[15] Rosemary Jean Richards, 'Georgiana McCrae's Manuscript Music Collections: A Life in Music.' (PhD diss. University of Melbourne, 2017), https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/192295, accessed 10 April 2024. 'Home-bound' refers to personal collections of music – manuscripts, printed sheet music, or both – that were assembled and hand-bound into volumes by their owners.

[16] https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/mccrae-homestead/.

set of English lyrics, ‘Farewell to the mothers that bore us’, taken from an 1858 English play; if you turn the sheet upside down, the same score has additional lyrics taken from a different theatrical source that refers to prisoners exiled to Siberia. This palimpsest, included in the illustrations, helps us understand how manuscript creation was not simply a matter of copying and transcribing, but allowed the owner to express her feelings of exile and nostalgia. While Richards does not suggest as much, it seems likely that McCrae, surely aware of the widely-disseminated tropes of exile common in Jacobite songs, may have intentionally repurposed that sentimentality in the context of her own colonial experience of displacement.

In an essay entitled ‘Laing, Findlay and Baillie: Identifying Scottishness in the music collections of three Scottish Australian violinists’, Shane Lestideau considers the Australian careers of three Scottish violinists and composers active between the late eighteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries. While all three men collected and composed tunes reflecting the standard sixteen- or thirty-two-bar structure of Scottish dance music, their approaches to composing and performing reflected the growing aspirations of Scottish-Australians over nearly 150 years, and the increasingly confident projection of their Scottish identity in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Lestideau’s attempt to distil the essence of the sound of ‘Scottish’ music for Australian readers may seem rather naïve to us in Scotland, but she sensibly recognises how the evolution of both repertoire and performance style reflected changing relationships between the colonists and Scotland over time, and shows how – whether at country fairs styled as ‘Highland Games’ or performances of Scottish music within the art-music contexts of ‘concerts’ – such efforts helped to perpetuate and to raise the cultural profile of Scottish musical traditions in Australia.

The first composer discussed by Lestideau, Alexander Laing (1792–1868), was a convict who settled and farmed in Tasmania and never fully overcame the difficult circumstances of his arrival. His collection was substantially prepared, either as a gift or a commission, for a neighbour. In addition to remembering and writing down Scottish music, particularly dance tunes associated with Niel and Nathaniel Gow, Laing also composed tunes in a Scottish idiom that he named for people and places in Tasmania. These efforts helped him not only to compensate for the challenges of his own exile, but also to build networks with others of shared ethnicity.

James Findlay (1821–1905), also a farmer, was wealthier and better-educated than Laing. After emigrating by choice to the Sydney area, he worked to develop new farming estates. Findlay’s collection included literary works by Burns and Walter Scott as well as music, and his contributions to his local community in Australia appear to have included organising social dances at which this music might be played. In its mixture of Scottish material with more generalised British songs of love and war, his collection is that of an educated man who aspires to prosper in his new environment.

Robert ‘Ballantyne’ Baillie (1886–1954) arrived in Australia in 1912 as a professional violinist. He worked as performer and violin teacher in an environment where classical music infrastructure had reached a point of relative maturity, and where being a particular kind of musician (‘Scottish Australian’) helped to position him in an increasingly competitive professional milieu. In addition to being a classically-trained musician, Baillie also presented himself as a tradition bearer. His transcriptions and arrangements, complete with bowing marks, of strathspeys and reels demonstrate his awareness of James Scott Skinner’s mingling of Scottish tradition with European virtuosity, and his own compositions display confidence in transforming simple folk melodies into long-form, soloistic pieces with piano accompaniment: Scottish music presented as art music.

In a chapter entitled ‘Dance music in nineteenth-century owner-bound albums’, Heather Blasdale Clarke examines a book of dance music owned and compiled by a Scottish woman, Lucy Havens (c. 1798–1825). Comparing Havens’ album with similar collections made by other women in nineteenth-century Australia, Clarke asks us to consider what such albums tell us about changing tastes in social dancing. Colonial dances gave young people opportunities to demonstrate their awareness of home-country fashions and identities, and thus tended to follow European trends. Born in Monimail in Fife but raised in the northwest of England, Lucy Havens enjoyed a reasonably affluent life in Sydney, married first to a local politician and then to a minister. Her music albums include dance music by

Nathanial Gow, Clarkson, Davie, and Morris, which she arranged for the piano. While her description of this as 'country dance' music may strike Scottish readers as somewhat blunt, Clarke presents evidence that Scottish tunes regularly featured in early colonial social dances along with the specialist choreography associated with particular strathspeys and reels.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, fashions had changed. The Scottish and, indeed, English 'country dance' had been displaced by the French quadrille, the pan-European (originally Polish) polka, and the Austrian waltz, reflecting what was probably a similar fashion in Britain at the time. Nineteenth-century Australians also enjoyed the "schottische" – a European version of a Scots-snap dance similar to the polka that had little to do with Scottish tradition and more to do with European taste for romantic novels (in translation) by Walter Scott – Scottish identity as seen through a lens of romantic 'othering'. Exceptionally, a fashion for the marginally more authentic-sounding 'highland reel' was sparked by Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred, during his tour of Australia in 1867, where on one occasion he apparently requested that dance. The prince's request appears to have been for a particular dance tune rather than a whole repertoire, and its subsequent popularity probably said more about Australia's affection for the royal family than about its Scottishness.

The other essays in this book, less relevant to Scottish studies, demonstrate how Australian music responded to new waves of music from jazz-age America. Influences from Asia, and indigenous populations, are not explored; the essays focus on a literate tradition of music curation, using western musical scores to reconstitute remembered repertoires. The two chapters dealing with New Zealand do not focus on the experiences of the many Scots who settled there, but rather upon the wider European repertoire featured in emigrant collections more generally. Clare Gleeson's essay, 'Those who played and bound: Bound volumes of piano music as an indicator of social change', discusses how the popularity of the piano grew in New Zealand as in Australia, and includes anecdotes of fathers giving daughters pianos when they married as a mark of aspiring gentility – a theme that will remind some readers of New Zealand filmmaker Jane Campion's 1993 film *The Piano*, about a fictional emigrant.

Finally, Matthew Stephens' essay 'From piano stool to library shelf: reconnecting library and museum owner-bound music collections with audiences' brings us full circle. As curator of the 2019 exhibition 'Songs of Home' at the Museum of Sydney, Stephens collaborated with academics at Glasgow University and Southampton University in an AHRC-funded project that, although principally focused on the musical life of New South Wales in the first seventy years of its existence, highlighted the importance of Scottish music as one strand in the weave of Indigenous and diasporic identities in modern Australia. Here in Scotland, awareness of Australian musical connections has fed into recording projects like Concerto Caledonia's *Songs of Home and Distant Isles: Music from Scotland in the Early Australian Colonies* (2020), which includes material from Georgiana McCrae's collection, illustrating the middle-class Lowland Scottish music-making that Georgiana knew from her youth and which she tried to preserve in her new home. Stephens' insights, like those of the other writers who contributed to this book, help us become aware of how these Scottish emigrants 'curated' the sounds of home, and thus allow us to imagine what that home world might have sounded like.

JANE PETTEGREE

***WEBSPINNER: Songs, Stories, and Reflections of Duncan Williamson, Scottish Traveller*. John D. Niles. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2022. Pp. 343+ix. Maps; illus. ISBN (hardback) 9781496841575.**

The present work adds to a considerable body of published literature, both academic and mainstream, documenting the life and traditions of the Scottish Travellers, and in particular the gifted singer and storyteller Duncan Williamson (1928–2007). But while acknowledging the most important of these earlier works, John D. Niles deliberately avoids duplicating information or materials that they contain, or that are otherwise widely available. As it turns out, the world of Duncan and his fellow Travellers

offers ample scope for further exploration. Niles has produced a solid and innovative work of ten chapters, eight of which are entirely in Duncan Williamson's own words, as transcribed from recordings made by Niles in a variety of settings.[17]

The plan of the book is undeniably ambitious. On the one hand, it offers 'a great deal about Williamson's character and values as a man … how he thought of his life in the world *through the medium of stories*' (4). At the same time, his accounts of growing up in the Travelling community in the 1930s and 1940s, and of leading a Traveller family in the middle of the last century will appeal to those interested in social history and ethnography. Initially, Niles's research motivations were ethnological: to better understand, from an 'emic' perspective, traditional storytelling among the Travellers in terms of its importance to culture and society, its educational function, its transmission, and its performance dynamics. Eventually, he began to wonder about 'the role of oral art forms in shaping the mental world that human beings inhabit', and how an understanding of master storytellers such as Duncan Williamson might shed light on earlier, even prehistoric, storytelling traditions (5–6). At the center of the approach is Duncan's own firm belief that stories and storytelling, far from abstractions, reflect and document a person's experience of life.

The recordings that form the core of this book were made between 1984 and 1986, primarily in Fife but also in the United States. In a resourceful move in fieldwork practice, Niles recorded Duncan in a variety of settings in order to capture how he adapted his style when performing for different sorts of audiences. While many of the recordings are one-on-one interviews, Niles also recorded Duncan speaking to groups of listeners. Sessions with multiple participants included two research groups from the United States, each comprising six to eight volunteers (1986 and 1988), as well as sessions attended by Travellers and other friends and family members. Black-and-white photographs, including many of Williamson himself, are provided throughout the text.

Following Niles's initial chapter, 'Williamson and the Travellers', the organization of the book is broadly thematic. Following the chronology of his life, Duncan describes his Traveller predecessors and family history, his childhood in Argyll, and how he made a living as a Traveller. His accounts contain valuable ethnographical information about courtship, marriage, and childrearing; foodways and conviviality; and music, storytelling and Traveller society. In a chapter entitled 'Scenes from a Vanished World', he responds to archival photographs of traditional Traveller life held in the Highland Folk Museum, located at the time in Kingussie. These photos – here rendered as sketches made by Niles's mother, Helen Beccard Niles – prompt memories in which Duncan is able to identify specific locations and even individuals. Throughout these eight chapters, Duncan has woven twenty songs and thirty-five distinct narratives, including tales, personal anecdotes and lore. Finally, Niles draws together his own conclusions from the recorded material and from his long and fruitful working relationship with Williamson in a chapter entitled 'Webspinner: The Book, the Poem, and the Man'.

Those who knew Duncan well will have heard some of the accounts in these chapters, but rarely in such detail. For the twenty-first century reader, the pervasive quality of Duncan's narrative account of his life reveals the power of the medium of story. The accounts of his family background and youth provide a good basis for understanding the world into which he was born and his passage through it. Many of the family stories are matter of fact, with relatives fondly remembered, and their various actions and situations described almost laconically. They also reveal the scores of ways in which travellers have made a living: the usual trades of tinsmithing, hawking and farm work, but also forestry and quarry work, and the constant, often friendly relations with the local aristocracy who owned the Argyll estate. And there were the signs even from Duncan's youth that the world was changing. In his Commentary at the end of the book, Niles notes that:

> Once, when Duncan was speaking of the woods near Furnace where he had lived as a child […], he remarked to me that his father had walked off alone into the hills one day

[17] Selections from John D. Niles's field recordings, photographs, and other documentation, including material about Duncan Williamson, can be found on the Scottish Voices website of the University of Wisconsin Digital Collections Center (https://search.library.wisc.edu/digital/AScottishVoicesColl).

> and had buried his tinsmithing tools where they would not be found. This was his way of ensuring that no son of his would take up the tinsmith's craft, which had become practically worthless in an era of cheap mass-produced goods. (285)

Duncan was born in a tent beside Loch Fyne, Argyll, delivered by his grandmother. There he was raised within a large family and – as he was often to mention – in constant contact with the natural world around him. From an early age he acquired skills such as guddling trout and snaring rabbits, developing a high sense of self-reliance, not least when it came to gathering food. Relations with the settled villagers nearby were not always cordial, but his treatment by the teachers at the local school (where attendance was mandatory for a certain number of days per year) was surprisingly positive, and encouraged him to read. As he grew, he acquired a wide range of other skills in keeping with his own saying, 'Everything in the world, you must learn everything to be a travellin people! You must have every trade in the world. Even though you're no guid at it, ye can try your best.' (87) Descriptions of various traditional crafts – e.g. gathering willows for making baskets with the accompanying photo – are often detailed and instructive and interspersed with stories. Apprenticed at age fifteen to stonemason Neil McCallum, Duncan not only learned a new trade, but gained access to an Argyll Gaelic storytelling tradition that he came to share widely. Later he became a competent horseman and cattle-dealer, as well as a scrap metal trader. These personal accounts, varying in subject and scene and frequently combined with songs and stories, are invariably engaging and entertaining.

Once he was a teenager old enough to travel on his own, Duncan ranged through Perthshire and northwards to Aberdeen, taking with him 'not one single thing. Just a coat and a pocketknife an some matches. That was all ye needed, nothing else' and enjoying 'a feeling o' freedom' that this life allowed (168). Staying in one camp after another as he worked his way around, he was introduced to the extensive Traveller networks throughout Scotland. Although he does not dramatize these encounters, his introduction to wider Traveller society reads like a singular experience.

It was around this time that he began to make an even greater discovery: the storehouse of traditions, particularly of story and song, of his people. Between 1945 and 1962 he 'travelled round the campfires' (185) listening to and learning as many songs is possible, becoming a field collector in his own right. He developed the ability to recite variants of a single item and recall where, when and from whom he had heard them; and he mentions that he could reproduce storytellers' dialects, whether Border or Highland. Duncan's account also confirms an interesting point regarding tale transmission, noted by other writers, namely, his ability to visualize, as a presence, the reciter from whom he heard the tale. Also worth noting is his remark that, though raised in a Traveller family, he was seventeen or eighteen before he 'knew what ballads were' (200). While he did not regard himself as an exceptional singer, he felt that performing was important as a means of maintaining the songs.

Stories are the other component of Duncan's oral repertoire and form the subject matter of the chapter entitled 'The How and Why of Storytelling'. Duncan is adamant in voicing his conviction that the story is a universal and fundamental part of human experience and a necessary tool for dealing with life's situations: 'a story happens from the minute you wake up in the mornin till you go to bed at night. Everything is a story. It's a story you being *here*' (222).

In his own chapters, Niles demonstrates how evaluating the importance of the material requires a thoughtful, often penetrating evaluation of the storyteller and his tradition. After explaining what motivated him to write this book, Niles assesses Duncan's place among Scottish traditional storytellers, explaining that he possesses a unique combination of gifts: Duncan is an outstanding performer, a charismatic and independent personality, a gifted listener, and the inheritor of an important body of tradition with a clear mission of maintaining and promoting it. With the emergence of the Scottish Folk movement in the 1960s, Duncan's gifts, motivations and circumstances placed him in an ideal position to be an effective mediator between his own people and a wider mainstream culture. He was consummately skilled in reading an audience, whether it was a small conversational group or a public performance. Niles observes, and I think rightly, that Duncan developed an increasingly 'cosmopolitan' perspective, placing him not so much *between* two worlds as *in* the world where we all belong (13).

In his final chapter, Niles discusses the contemporary relevance of the Traveller ethos and worldview, now accepted by audiences, particularly young people, and those sections of modern society which share concerns regarding environment, social anomie, entrenched individualism and commercialism. Niles dismisses charges of romanticism as inconsistent with the evidence gained from recordings and the Travellers' own direct experience. The chapter ends with a discussion of the storyteller's role as 'Webspinner' (hence the title of the book). Anyone experienced in ethnographic field work knows that close, collaborative friendships between tradition bearers and field workers have existed for generations. Niles's high regard for Duncan Williamson as a tradition bearer, as an individual, and as a friend never interferes with his ability to assess his subject in appropriate and professional terms.

The main text of the book is generously and competently provided with supporting materials useful to readers in Scotland and beyond, and will offer an effective point of departure for further research. A list of songs and stories is included, and the author's chapter-by-chapter Commentary provides background information in a separate section, dispensing with the need for lengthy and cumbersome footnotes. Two appendices providing detailed descriptions of recording and transcription practices are followed by a list of transcriptions; a glossary of Scots and Traveller cant terms; and a selected bibliography.

JOHN SHAW

***Scottish Religious Poetry from the Sixth Century to the Present.* Selected and introduced by Linden Bicket, Emma Dymock and Alison Jack. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 2024. Pp. 326. ISBN 9781800830479.**

The first edition of this anthology was published in 2000, and has been out of print for some time. As such, a reprint would have been welcome on its own, but Saint Andrew Press have given us something more: a fully overhauled and expanded new edition. Taking the baton from the first version's editorial crew (Meg Bateman, Robert Crawford and James McGonigal), a trio of Edinburgh-based scholars Linden Bicket, Alison Jack (both of New College) and Emma Dymock (Celtic and Scottish Studies) have produced a worthy spiritual successor to the book's first incarnation.

While the second edition is, in terms of its content, largely *homoousian* with the first, the quarter century between the editions has seen some important changes. Some of these pertain to changes within Scotland itself, for instance the growth of more ethnically diverse communities and faith traditions is represented in the work of Imtiaz Dharker, Bashabi Fraser and Alycia Pirmohamed. Pirmohamed is one of several poets in the volume, among whom also are the Gaelic poet Niall O'Gallagher and Shetlander Roseane Watt, who have emerged in the Scottish poetry scene since the publication of the first edition and who demonstrate that poetic engagement with the questions and challenges of faith continues to grow and develop in new ways. We also see a poem apiece from Bateman, Crawford and McGonigal, who did not include any of their own work (aside from translations) in the first edition.

This is not simply a matter of new wine being poured into an old wineskin, however, as the new edition has retained some of the poets from the first, but with different poems representing them, as with Kathleen Jamie ('Sky-burial' in the first edition; 'The Buddleia' and 'Meadowsweet' in the second), Carol Anne Duffy ('Plainsong' in the first edition; 'Prayer' and 'Pilot's Wife' in the second) and John Burnside (retaining 'Canticle', but swapping out 'The Noli Me Tangere Incident' for 'Nativity'). Others, such as Iain Crichton Smith, Jackie Kay, Liz Lochead and Tom Leonard, go from one poem apiece in the first edition to two apiece in the second, and Violet Jacob and Marion Angus are also more generously represented now than before.

In general, more recent work in Gaelic has a welcome stronger presence in the new edition, with contributions by Caoimhin MacNèill, Sandaidh NicDhòmhnaill Jones, Aonghas Phàdraug Caimbeul, Marion F. NicIlleMhoire and the aforementioned O' Gallagher. The inclusion of more Gaelic women poets, such as Màiri N NicGhillEathain, means this collection gives more space than the previous edition to allow Gaelic women to speak on their own behalf concerning religion, and not only

allowing Somhairle MacGill-Eain and Iain Crichton Smith to speak for them (though these canonical modern Gaelic poets also, of course, have their merited place in the anthology).

But, as John the Baptist recognised, if one is to increase then another must decrease, and so some cuts have had to be made to enable these new voices to take their place. Thus, Iain Moireasdan (Gobha na Hearadh), Dòmhnall Ruadh Choruna, Andrew Greig and Robin Fulton are among those making way. Similarly, the new edition does not provide the original-language versions of poems written in Old English, Old Norse, Latin or Gaelic prior to the seventeenth century: a space-saving measure which is reasonably justified by the point that those able to read these languages are now more easily able to do so in editions available elsewhere than they were a quarter of a century ago.

The translations of these earlier materials are themselves enjoyable as poetry, one particular highlight being Edwin Morgan's Englishing of 'The Maker on High' (i.e. 'Altus Prosator', attributed to Saint Columba), which retains the acrostic structure of the Latin original, as well as elements of the original's flexible rhyming patterns. Robert Crawford's translation of 'The Dream of the Rood' likewise carefully reproduces the alliteration so central to poetry in Old English.

The collection, as befits its scope, varies greatly in subject matter, and includes works of praise, invocations of God and His saints, metrical Psalms and Paraphrases for communal sung worship and quiet, personal reflections which veer between doubt and longing, rejection and acceptance of faith, and meditations on the complex relationships between faith, ethnicity, individuality and culture. We can see some poets containing these multitudes within themselves: the medieval makar William Dunbar, for instance, has his technical *tour de force* on the Ressurrection, 'Done is a Battell on the Dragon Blak', his sublime, highly Latinate poem in praise of the Virgin Mary ('Hale, Sterne Superne') and his playful imitation of the liturgy as he intercedes for the poor unfortunate souls trapped in Stirling ('Quhair' he says, 'nowdir plesance nor delyt is') and prays that they may come to share the heavenly bliss of living in Edinburgh (*Et ne nos inducere in temptationem de Strivilling:/ Sed libera nos a malo illus./ Requiem Edinburgi dona eiis, Domine,/ Et lux ipsius luceat eiis.*). Burns, likewise, gives us a satire on self-righteous hypocrites in 'Holy Willie's Prayer', his ribald 'Address to the Deil' (where Auld Nick is as much a being of local oral tradition as of Scripture) as well as the sincere, tender idealisation of the devout Lowland peasantry in 'The Cottar's Saturday Night'). Hymns, polemics (of the Reformation and the Disruption), disputes which might seem arcane now to most (Ramsay's 'The Marrow Ballad'), the complex legacy of the Covenant, both reverence for and resentment of institutions like Sabbath observance, different views on whether the Gospel means freedom and assurance or social control and conformity, the words of those who believe, those who do not and those who wished they could: the anthology is a poetic record of the people of Scotland's relationship to faith, expressed in different languages, traditions and forms, a relationship that has not always been easy but which remains compelling.

It is also a record that is not only Scottish but also international in scope. From the Columban church linking Scotland and Ireland, to the Norse pirates bewildered by and contemptuous of Christian monks, from George Buchanan's Latin elegy for Calvin, the French theologian in Geneva, to the growing South Asian diaspora communities of Scotland, these poems are not parochial in their concerns nor is the anthology parochial in its ambit (however many of the poets may have been parish ministers, of course!).

This thoughtful, well-presented and varied collection is sure to provide food for thought and reflection, along with amusement and provocation, for both personal reading and – since many of the poems were composed for just this purpose – for use in churches and meetings of different kinds. The collection is not burdened by copious apparatus, but does provide a short, thoughtful introduction – partially on the criteria for selection, at a time when neither 'Scottish' nor 'religious' have the same straightforward and obvious meanings they were once thought to have – and brief biographical notes on the poets.

DUNCAN SNEDDON

Where Men No More May Reap or Sow: The Little Ice Age: Scotland 1400–1850. **Richard D. Oram. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2024. ISBN 978 0 85976 717 0. Pp. xii+420. £75.00 (hardback).**
This is an ambitious and important book. It forms the second instalment of Richard Oram's three-volume Environmental History of Scotland, covering a millennium and a half, from AD 400 to 2021. As its title indicates, the volume under review examines the 'Little Ice Age', defined as the period between the climatic deterioration in the late Middle Ages and the middle decades of the 19th century. It charts Scotland's transition from medieval to modern times through the lens of the two-way interchange between environment and humanity which lies at the heart of environmental history. Focusing on the rural environment and the agrarian economy and society, Oram explores how environmental factors, especially climate change, affected patterns of land use and economy, and also how changing patterns of human activity and resource exploitation resulted in environmental change. This interplay sets the agenda for the study.

Four strands run through the book: the history of woodlands; arable land and pasture; fuel supply; and fishing. Although not formally divided into sections, the chapters are grouped chronologically into four periods: the 'new normal' of the late-medieval climatic cooling; the 'age of shocks and transitions' across the 16th and 17th centuries, culminating in the harvest failures and famine of the 'Seven Ill Years' (1695–1702); the 18th century through to 1790; and the 'sting in the tail' of the weather extremes in the period 1790 to 1850. This gives the book a strong chronological structure, though it means that discussion of individual themes (woodland management; peat exploitation; enclosure; fisheries, for example) is fragmented and scattered. Throughout, Richard Oram has mustered a hugely impressive breadth and richness of detailed evidence, drawing on environmental data, published work by historians, geographers and archaeologists, and a wide range of printed and manuscript primary sources.

As well as tracing the four themes, the book provides a detailed reconstruction of Scotland's climate, decade by decade (in later periods, almost year by year), explaining in an accessible way the environmental indicators which can be used as proxies for climate data. The bulk of the reconstruction comes from a thorough trawl through documentary evidence (diaries, estate records, travel journals and so on) and thus represents a distinctively historical contribution to Scotland's climate history. However, it has to be said that the abundance of factual detail can result in the catalogue of short-term weather events obscuring longer-term trends in climate.

The thematic chapters are full of stimulating ideas, which consistently question assumptions and received narratives. The human response to environmental change is displayed on many fronts. Oram argues that the 16th and 17th centuries saw a change in mindset, presaging the Improvement rhetoric of the 18th century, in which landowners responded to shortages resulting from environmental shock by attempting to increase productivity, including the more intensive management of woodland. The use of seaweed as a fertilizer on arable ground, recorded from the 15th century, appears to have taken off at a time when greater quantities were washed up on the shore during extreme weather and storms. He notes the recurrent disputes and violence over peat mosses in the quest for adequate supplies of domestic fuel, exacerbated by the difficulty of securing fuel supplies when wet summer weather prevented cut peats from drying. Tensions over access to resources contributed to wider social and economic stresses – Oram argues that the environmental impacts of climate change contributed directly to the political and religious upheavals of the 16th and 17th centuries. Later environmental shocks – such as the sudden and wide fluctuations in herring numbers as a result of changing oceanic circulation patterns in the 18th and early 19th centuries, or the devastating effects of potato blight in the 1840s – also had wide social, economic and political consequences.

On the other side of the coin, human activity had major impacts on the environment, especially during the 'age of improvement', which naturally forms the dominant theme from the decades around 1700. 'Improved' farming had many faces: land reform (the replacement of joint-tenancy quasi-subsistence farming by commercial single tenancies); enclosure and partition of the land; land drainage; the conversion of muir and moss into arable ground; and single-species woodland plantations. It thus changed the face of Scotland and Oram vividly draws out the changing colour

and texture of the rural landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries. But it also involved less visible changes, in soil structure and chemistry (notably through drainage, liming and the introduction of new manures such as guano) and in biodiversity (the replacement of multi-species unimproved grassland by rye grass and clover, for example, and the move from traditional management of mixed woodland to the monoculture of plantations).

The sheer wealth of evidence presented in each chapter is the book's most striking feature and its great strength, but the larger picture sometimes becomes lost in the welter of narrative detail. Could more have been done to synthesise the evidence? Distribution maps of some of the historical data could perhaps have helped to stress the diversity of landscapes and environments within Scotland, and their differing environmental histories, for example.

Penning this review from south of the Border, I am struck by the resonances of this book's themes well beyond Scotland. So much of the received understanding of agrarian and landscape history in England comes from the lowland southern and eastern counties. Yet in terms of climate and topography, much of the rest of England and Wales bears closer similarities to Scotland. Pastoral farming; agriculture on the climatic margins; the distinctive histories of mountain and moorland; peat bog and ancient woodland –themes explored in depth in this book – are also key elements in the environmental history of much of northern and western England and of Wales.

Handsomely produced and richly illustrated, this is a book which deserves to be savoured. The wealth of evidence it presents; the range of topics it touches on; and the subtle (and sometimes tentative) arguments it constructs require thoughtful reading; they are the great strength of this welcome study. Richard Oram has assembled an impressive body of evidence and drawn out the salient themes in the interplay between society and environment across the 'Little Ice Age', providing a new baseline for future research into Scotland's environmental history.

ANGUS J. L. WINCHESTER

Nancy Currier Dorian, 1936–2024

WILSON McLEOD

Professor Nancy Dorian, who made an immense contribution to Scottish Gaelic linguistics and the study of minority languages around the world, died on 24 April 2024 at the age of 88.

Born in New Jersey in 1936, Professor Dorian earned a bachelor's degree in German from Connecticut College for Women in 1958, followed by an MA in 1961 and PhD in 1965 from the University of Michigan. She served as Professor of German and Linguistics at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania between 1965 and 1989, and also held posts at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Kiel. Her later years were spent at South Harpswell on the coast of Maine.

As part of her doctoral research, Professor Dorian came to Scotland in 1963 to work on the Gaelic Division of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland. She was assigned to collect data on the then little-known East Sutherland dialect, in the villages of Golspie, Brora and Embo. These villages had been developed in the early nineteenth century when the population of the cleared inland straths were put to work at fishing. Compared to the wider local population, Gaelic was maintained considerably longer among the fishing community, who were socially marginalised and stigmatised. Although language shift was well advanced by the 1960s, Professor Dorian was able to find over two hundred speakers of the local variety of Gaelic. She made the important decision to include in her research not only the most fluent speakers but also those with a lesser range of abilities, including those she called 'semi-speakers', as this allowed her to develop a rich view of the ways the language both changed and did not change through the generations.

Following on the publication of her linguistic description of the dialect in 1978, Professor Dorian's groundbreaking monograph *Language Death: The Life Cycle of a Scottish Gaelic Dialect* appeared in 1981. Her sensitive analysis of the social factors that had brought about the distinct sociolinguistic situation of Gaelic in East Sutherland and the dynamics of language use among different kinds of speakers was highly influential for the developing field of minority language sociolinguistics. She also published an oral history of the East Sutherland fishing community, *The Tyranny of Tide* (1985).

A striking finding in Professor Dorian's research was the extent of grammatical variation among different speakers of the East Sutherland dialect, variation that could not be connected to differences in age, fluency or other social criteria, as conventional sociolinguistic theory would anticipate. She discussed these issues in her important 2010 monograph *Investigating Variation*.

Over the decades she published numerous detailed analyses of a wide range of linguistic issues in East Sutherland Gaelic and other minority languages. Twenty-three of her most important articles and book chapters were collected in the 2014 volume *Small-Language Fates and Prospects*.

Ill-health prevented Professor Dorian from travelling to Scotland after 1978, so her later research on the East Sutherland dialect was mainly conducted using recordings and by means of telephone conversations with her contacts from the area. In 2015, however, she was able to travel to Scotland for the first time in almost forty years. She gave a plenary lecture at the International Congress of Celtic Studies in Glasgow and was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Glasgow.

Professor Dorian was deeply concerned with the maintenance and revitalisation of minority languages around the world. For many years she served as the editor of the 'Small languages and small communities' section of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*. In this capacity she played a crucial role in fostering the development of this emerging research field and encouraged scholars and activists in many different language communities. Her 1990 edited volume *Investigating*

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Obsolescence was a particularly important contribution to the field of minority language sociolinguistics.

Professor Dorian recognised that successful language revitalisation might require flexibility, adaptation and change rather than steadfast adherence to tradition. She took up these issues in her final contribution to the field of Scottish Gaelic Studies, ‘‘Speaking Gaelic – cò tha dì-beathte?’, a plenary lecture (delivered remotely) to Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 9 at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in 2016.

I had the great privilege of studying under Professor Dorian in 1983, when her inspiring course on Celtic Civilisation at Bryn Mawr was my first introduction to the field. She encouraged me to go to the University of Aberdeen to learn Gaelic, thus beginning my own study of the language. She remained very supportive and encouraging of my work, and we corresponded regularly for many years. Despite being away from Scotland for so long, she was always keen to stay abreast not only of new academic work in Gaelic sociolinguistics, but also of progress in official support for Gaelic, which encouraged her greatly.

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