

A new group is forming to celebrate the ritual of tea drinking. We will be getting together at least monthly to have tea tastings and celebrate the foods that usually accompany the drinking of tea. The format will be similar to book or wine clubs. This is a new idea from the collaboration of Sinead and Annag-Mairi. If you are interested in joining us or would like to host a meeting, please contact tartan@halcyon.com or annagm@home.com. We will have short meetings and emphasize the comfort of tea and refreshments with stories, poems, and history of tea rituals. Gaelic language will also be a feature of the get-togethers whenever possible.

Tea Group Forming

Forgot to buy your T-shirt at the Féis? It's not too late! The cost for Féis shirts from this year and regular Slighe logo shirts is \$15-\$16 for sizes XL and XXL. We also have a few of the 1998 Féis shirts for \$10. The Ruithe shirts are \$15. The running kilts are \$45 and come in limited tartans, but are wash-able and comfortable for casual and exercise wear. We also have a supply of Gaelic-language greeting cards for most occasions at a cost of \$1 each or 5 for \$4. There are also Slighe Ceili songbooks, which sell for \$1 and contain many of the Ceili favorites. These can be ordered online or by snail mail (contact tartan@halcyon.com for more information). Sorry checks or money orders only at this time as we're not Visa/MC friendly yet.

T-Shirts and Kilts and Songbooks, Oh My!

Slighe nan Gaidheal

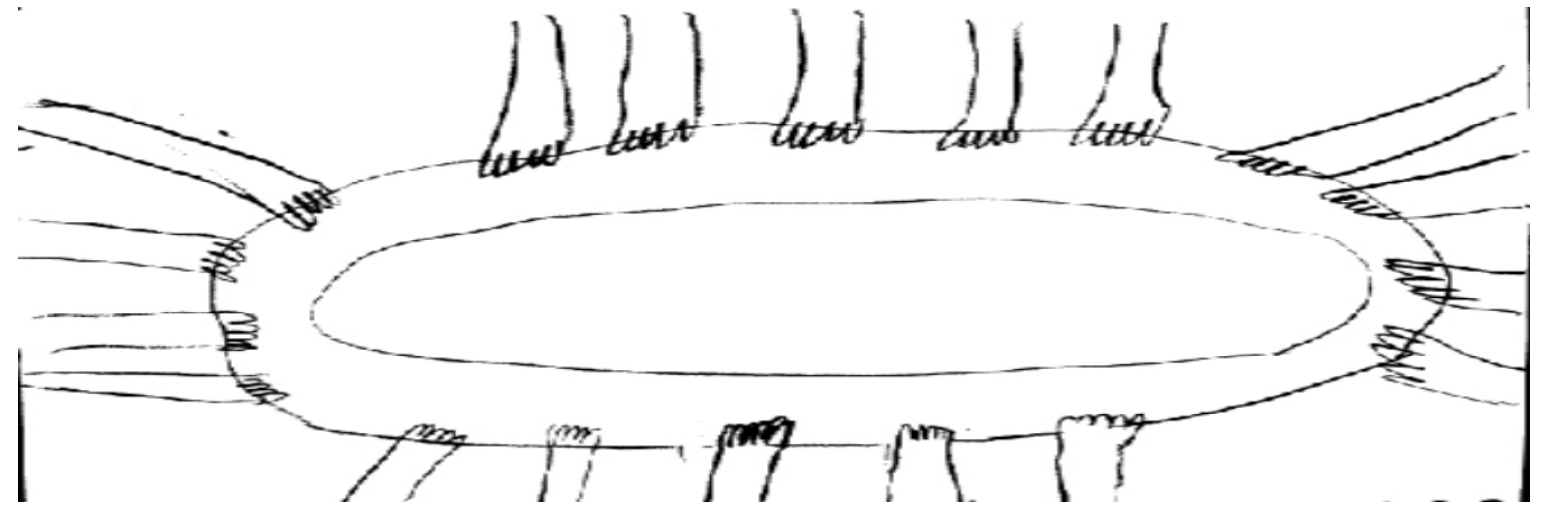
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Seattle's Gaelic language
& cultural society



Féis Shiàtail 2000: A Nan's-Eye View

Nan Pardew

Well, I'm not saying that Féis Shiàtail 2000 was big, but it was more than a year in the preparation and the people of Seattle (and elsewhere) held pleasant conversation and feasting with 14 masters of traditional Gaelic arts for a week without ceasing...

In fact, there was too much happening at Féis Shiàtail 2000 for any one person to be able to describe all of it. From the Sunday morning before the Féis, when volunteers arrived to set up armed with sound equipment, stage sets, duct tape, bushels of heather, ironing boards, irons, computer equipment, miles of plaid cloth, and various other essentials, until tear-down the following Sunday, everything happened on a heroic scale.

The hours were long, with people arriving at Town Hall before 9:00 AM and staying until the wee hours of the morning, the classes were intense and wonderful, the concerts were amazing and wonderful, and the participants, organizers, volunteers, and faculty were eager, exalted, and exhausted.

see Féis Shiàtail 2000, page 3

Calling All Volunteers! Calling All Volunteers!

Slighe is building a Volunteer group for all our various events. Coming this summer, we will have a booth at the Highland Games at Enumclaw during the weekend of July 29-30. Load-in is Friday evening and Saturday morning. We would love to have some of our faithful membership come out for a volunteer shift on either or both days. You can help inaugurate the all-new Slighe booth!!! Thanks for the generous donation from Judy (Sinead Menzies) Webster and Bruce MacMillan Urquhart Singleton.

see Volunteers, page 2

Gaelic Camp 2000 Cancelled

The Board of Directors regrets to announce that, due to several logistical problems, it is necessary to cancel Gaelic Camp 2000. The Board is fully committed to producing future Gaelic Camps when resources permit.

Anyone who has already registered for Gaelic Camp 2000 will receive a full refund, of course.

Saturday, September 9 will be our first activity day in the fall - look for announcements in late August about which exciting activities to expect this fall and winter!

We look forward to seeing you SOON!

Volunteers, continued

We will be staying out of the sun thanks to the shade and space provided by the new and bigger booth. Help is needed to set up and tear down, work in the booth to provide information about Slighe and what we're all about, sell merchandise, and generally have some fun. We will be next to North Channel Kilts, so we'll have plenty of opportunity to socialize with our friends who make the kilts.

There will be plenty of time to wander around the grounds and enjoy the spirit of the Highland Games while spending time with your friends in the booth and soaking up all the Highland culture from the various performers, piping, dancing, and agrarian experiences, not to mention the sports-related events.

If you are interested in volunteering for Slighe, contact Pandora at pandorafitzpatrick@earthlink.com. We can use your help and support!!!

Resignations from the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors regrets to announce that three members have resigned recently. Sheila Hunter and Judy Webster have elected to withdraw from the Board due to personal conflicts with other board members. Richard Hill has resigned from the Board in order to devote all of his time to teaching and performing.

All three of their resignations were accepted at a special meeting of the Board of Directors held on July 1st. Minutes of this meeting will be published to the egroups list upon approval.

The Board wishes to thank each of the three departing members for their unique contributions to the work of Slighe nan Gaidheal and to Gaidhlig culture in general.

If you are interested in helping the Board by filling one of the vacant positions until the next regularly scheduled election in October, please contact Pandora Fitzpatrick at pandorafitzpatrick@earthlink.net or (206) 779-2444.

Publication Information

Am Bradan Fiosa is produced on a quarterly basis for the members of Slighe nan Gaidheal by the Publications Committee and additional contributors.

Editor Nan Pardew
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Contributors to this issue: Diane Moss, Erynn Rowan Laurie, Ted Neveln, Aonghas MacNeacail, Gary Ingle, and Nan Pardew

If you would like to work on the Publications Committee, please contact Seumas at (206) 297-8398 or via email at seumasg@home.com

Next Publication deadline: September 15th, 2000

Report on the June Intensive Day

Diane Moss

Beginning, intermediate, and advanced students took advantage of the Gaelic Education Committee's last intensive day of the season on June 10th. A lively round of classes kept everyone moving and busy, as each level spent an hour with Rich Hill, learning a song; with Gary Ingle, learning a poem; and with Seumas Gagne, learning a story.

see Intense, page 7

Smaointean mu'n Smeòrach

Ted Neveln

While teaching Gàidhlig at the Fèis, Rosemary McCormack mentioned that "brù-dhearg" ("red belly") refers to the European robin, while "smeòrach" is Gàidhlig for "thrush." Settling in Cape Breton, the Gaels found no European robins and called the American robin "smeòrach." That was logical, since our American robin is actually a thrush.

Rosemary mentioned this while discussing Kenneth A. Fergusson's poem "Do'n Cheud Smeòrach" ("To the First Robins"), in honor of birds whose arrival is eagerly awaited at the end of the long Cape Breton winter.

Here is the first stanza:

Ceud mìle fàilte, eònein bhinn,
Gur taitneach leinn do theachd-sa,
'S tu air a' gheuig a's àird' dhe'n chraoibh,
A' seinn do cheòil cho tlachdmhor.
Tha 'n geamhradh fuar air fhogradh uainn
'S thill thu ris, gu bòidheach grinn.
Eòin bhinn, ceud mìle fàilte!

A hundred thousand welcomes, sweet birds,
how pleasant to us your occupation,
and you on the highest branch of the tree, singing your song so lovely.
Gone from us is the cold winter, in which we were not hearing your song
but you returned again, so neat and lovely.
Little bird, a hundred thousand welcomes!

(Translation: Rosemary McCormack; source: B&R Heritage Enterprises, PO Box 3, Iona, NS B0A 1L0. Phone/Fax (902) 725-2013)

Rosemary admired the word "grinn," implying "neat and compact." The primary meanings in Dwelly are "handsome," "elegant," and "beautiful," but there are other associations worth looking up. Rosemary also noted "tlachdmhor" as worth study.

By coincidence, Rich recently used "Cha dèan aon smeòrach Samhradh" ("One thrush does

not make a summer") as an example of a proverb in class. By another coincidence, one of the albums sold at the Fèis was *Tàlant nam Bàrd* by Margo Carruthers, which includes "Do'n Cheud Smeòrach."

Other memories of the Fèis: Catriona Parsons tricking her pupils into acquiring Gàidhlig grammar; the aroma of damp wool after a waulking; the circle of microphones around Rona Lightfoot as she recited canntaireachd with eyes half-closed and compared syllables with Colin MacRae; Colin MacRae and John Dally in the sleepy hours of the final afternoon musing on alternate and older ways to play pipe tunes; John Dally effortlessly making the whole auditorium resound to his piob-mhór; Erynn Laurie sitting alone in the afternoon silence of the lobby working on a poem to recite.

Intense, continued

Rotating between the kitchen, the lobby, and the main hall of the Queen Anne Masonic Center, the students listened and repeated, translated, read aloud, and planned a presentation for tea time.

At four in the afternoon, we all gathered for tea and snacks, and each class showed the group what they had learned. We were entertained by everything from simple songs to complex ballads, stories presented as readings and as skits, and poems (one translated from Old Irish to Gaelic to English).

It was especially impressive to see the beginners jump in and participate so enthusiastically! Many thanks to all who joined us for the day, and special thanks to our three teachers for their careful planning and creative lessons.

Second Annual Ruith nam Bradan

Nan Pardew

A bright, chilly Saturday morning in Ballard. When I arrive, there are three canopies, two tables, and one person. Gradually, more people trickle in. Somewhere nearby, someone's out setting up the course for the second annual Ruith nam Bradan Great Kilted Run.

The trickle becomes a flood. Running kilts arrive, and T-shirts for runners and volunteers. We set up one of the tables for people who have pre-registered for the run and one for drop-in registrations and kilt rental. I'm assigned to the pre-registered table to check names and hand out running numbers and T-shirts.

Runners arrive. I pull on pale-yellow volunteer T-shirt over my plaid flannel shirt and feel a little warmer. Soon I have a long line of people waiting for their numbers and shirts.

"Hi! What's your name?...Here's your number. Shirt size? Medium? OK, here you go. Get your kilt at the next table over. Hi! What's your name?..." I get into a rhythm, but am almost overwhelmed before I acquire a partner, who takes over handing out shirts. He's great at guessing sizes. The line for kilts is long and I feel guilty about sending runners to it, but there's no alternative. Eventually, all have numbers, shirts, and kilts, or at least some plaid to wrap around their waists. There are opening remarks. Rich Hill sings. The runners line up.

The starting gun cracks and the runners at the head spring forward. Soon they're all gone, so I tidy up and wander over to look at the Gael-song table. There's a call for volunteers to take numbers and spike them on the spindles as the runners come in. Roxanne and I volunteer. I'll pull numbers, she'll spike them.

We stand at the end of the final chute, and the first runners come in.

"Pull your tags please! Great job!" we yell at them. The runners hand us the tags from their numbers with sweaty hands; their eyes are somewhere else. I pass tags to Roxanne in order and she slides them face-down onto the spindles. There's a gap after the front-runners, then the main body funnels into the chute and we're overwhelmed. Some try to pass around people in front of them. Some don't realize they need to take the tags off their numbers; I stop them to get their tags. I recognize some from various Slighe events and greet them. People in the chute pile up. "Please PULL your tags! Thanks, great job! Thanks! Please PULL your tags!" Keep the tags in order, hand them to Roxanne, stop the runner walking away with her tag...The torrent of runners narrows to a trickle, then a few panting latecomers. "Thanks, great job! Thanks! Please PULL your tags!"

There are no more runners. Roxanne and I wait for stragglers, until we're told no more are coming. Roxanne hands the spindles over to Amy, who will determine the runners' order and times, and we help put away the flagging and stanchions that marked the chute.

Most runners melt away. Those who did well and the organizers and volunteers migrate across the street to Hale's Brewery for bratwurst and beer while they wait for the results. Results tallied, Nicholas and Rich hand out the prizes. There's further merrymaking at Hale's. We pack up the remaining T-shirts, kilts, and miscellaneous and head home. It's been a successful Running of the Salmon.

Féis Shiàtail 2000, continued

Mornings were spent in classes focused on the various "major" tracks presented, followed by Gaelic classes for everybody. After lunch, we went back for further focused classes, then the instructors got together to present open interdisciplinary classes that brought together singers and harpers, step-dancers and fiddlers, and poets and storytellers, to name a few. I don't know what happened in the other tracks, but the harpers got a thorough workout, many things to think about and try, and eight new tunes from Alison Kinnaird, who, besides being a fantastic harper, is one of the world's nicest people.

And, of course, in the evenings, there were the concerts and céilidhs. All of the concerts were great fun. The Host Concert gave us a chance to see, hear, enjoy, and cheer on many of our talented Slighe members. A concert version of "Am ri Teachd," Seirm's contribution to the Féis entertainments, presented the charming prospect space aliens learning Gaelic by telepathy (wish I could do that!). The Faculty Concert, which featured the enormous range and great talents of the Féis Shiàtail 2000 faculty, was a journey to the Enchanted Isles. And the Cèilidh Mhór was an endearing mix of performances, from the good humor and great ambition of James Hunter's students, who presented several hundred years of Scottish history in three minutes, to John Dally's amazing piping, which brought tears to the eyes of his teacher. I wish I could tell you about the céilidhs, but I didn't have enough stamina to stay for them!

Everyone has a different collection of Féis Shiàtail 2000 memories. My favorites are Mary Janet MacDonald stepdancing to Rona Lightfoot's canntaireachd accompaniment, Alison Kinnaird's well-worn harp with the forepillar bowed over, and listening to Aonghas MacNeacail and Paraig MacNeill discuss Gaelic poetry and storytelling with an enthusiastic circle of students. Many, many thanks to the insanely hard-working Féis committee for making it all possible!

Do Ghaidheil Shiàtail Aonghas Dubh Mac Neacail

On choinnich mi rìbh,
Chlann an oirthir seo, sìar
Air gach àird agus gleann nam eòl,

Thug ur baile dhomh fàil'
Ann a sheòmraichean tlàth
Tha cur thairis le gàir agus ceòl.

Thaom bùrn cairdeis mar fhion
Ann an sruth glan neo-fhiar
Gu mo thaitneadh na chiatadh lòin:

Tha grian leugach an dùil
Mar leus dhearbht' anns gach sùil,
Gum bi cànan ar tùs an seo beò.

Ach tha neo-shuim an t-saoghail
Ann, mar fhuachd a ni traogh
Air an smior a chùm craobhan beò:

Ach le faire, is lùths
Làn ur misneachd mar chlùmh,
Ni sibh cinnteach nach mùchar deò

On choinnich mi rìbh,
Chlann an oirthir seo, sìar
Air gach àird agus gleann nam eòl,

Thug ur baile dhomh fàil'
Ann a sheòmraichean tlàth
Tha cur thairis le gàir agus ceòl.

To the **Gaels of Seattle**
please see translation by
Gary Ingle on page 4



tongue of hearts for Nuala ni Dhomhnaill

Erynn Rowan Laurie

it is
a question of language, you know
all of our tongues
the tongue of my birth is English,
lingua franca
some would say lingua futura, no doubt,
but many have passed this way before;

where is Latin, then
or Sanskrit
or the picture-words of Egypt,
the mighty Greek of Alexander
who conquered the world?
where are the tongues of Babylon,
sailing the Euphrates,
now seen only
pressed in the clay
of millennia?

and Gaelic too,
once the language of poets,
singers,
keepers of law and rite,
heir to the music of heaven itself?

the tongue of my birth is the tongue of thieves

it has stolen from all:
crag and cosmos
psyche and squash
alcohol and alchemy

this tongue of thieves has stolen
magic;
not simply words but entire tongues have gone
or are leaving
or barely holding on

i think that
we
should steal them back

like Raven,
or Prometheus
gathering fire from the gods
steal back the torn away tongues of our mothers
our grandmothers
our ancestors long gone to dust

within me i have three tongues:
the tongue of birth
the tongue of speech
and the tongue of hearts

what is the tongue of your heart?

Angus MacNeacail

Since I met you
Clan of this coast, west
Of every height and glen I know,

Your town has welcomed me
In its pleasant rooms
That overflow with laughter and music.

The water of friendship like wine flowed
In a clear straight stream
To my pleasure: a handsome pool.

The glittering sun of hope is
As a ray of certainty in every eye,
That the language of our beginning will be alive here.

But the world's disinterest is
There, like the cold that drains
The sap that keeps trees alive:

But with watchfulness, and vigor
Cloaked with your courage
You will make sure the breath of life will not be extinguished.

Since I met you
Clan of this coast, west
Of every height and glen I know,

Your town has welcomed me
In its pleasant rooms
That overflow with laughter and music.

Calendar

- August 18-20 Gàidhlig Camp — *Cancelled! See announcement on front page*
- August 27 Féis Shiàtail 2002 Launch Meeting 10:00am – Noon Location TBA. Contact Pandora Fitzpatrick for more information at pandorafitzpatrick@earthlink.net or (206) 779-2444
- September 9 Slighe 2nd Saturday activities TBA; Board Meeting 9:30-12:00, potluck & céilidh 8:00pm @ QAMC
- October 28 Annual General Meeting Activities, potluck & céilidh Time and Location TBA
- November 11 Slighe 2nd Saturday activities TBA; Board Meeting 9:30-12:00, potluck & céilidh 8:00pm @ QAMC
- December 9 Slighe all-day Board retreat followed by potluck & céilidh @ QAMC. TBA

Election Committee Forming

Slighe nan Gaidheal elects new board members to the board of directors at the Annual General Meeting in October. Planning for the fall's election begins in the summer, and is handled by the Election Committee. If you have served on this committee in the past and would like to do so again, or if you are interested in joining the committee this year, please contact Diane Moss at (206) 542-6034, or at zawamoss@seanet.com, and she will get you the information you need to get started.

Reminder Regarding Membership Revocation

Recent questions regarding the circumstances under which a member of Slighe nan Gaidheal can have her or his membership revoked have arisen and, due to the fact that the questions sent Board members diving into their Bylaws for an answer, suggested that a general reminder might be timely.

As stated in our Bylaws, Section 9, Paragraph 3, an individual's membership may be revoked if:

“After providing the member with reasonable written notice and an opportunity to be heard either orally or in writing, upon a determination by the Board of Directors that the member has engaged in conduct materially and seriously prejudicial to the interests or purposes of the corporation.”

As part of our discussion, the Board has further defined the term “conduct materially and seriously prejudicial” to include, but not be limited to: verbal or physical intimidation, harassment, abusive language, and violent behavior.

We all want the community that our organization fosters to be a safe, healthy, and fun one for everyone who loves and pursues the Gàidhlig language and culture. Reaching that goal and maintaining it requires that we all do our part to respect and care for one another's dignity and perspective.