

Cròileagan News

Tollcross Cròileagan held its AGM on 25th May. The committee elected for the coming year is as follows:
Chair: Wilma Laird
Secretary: Mary Lye
Treasurer: Marion Thompson
Members: Sarah Scott, Zoe Emmerson, Nicola Forrest

You can contact the committee at:
croileagantollcross@hotmail.co.uk

The committee will be spending time this year working on projects to help the use of Gaelic in the home. We are setting up a library of story sacks, each of which will include a book, a recording, a toy or game and vocabulary sheets. We have also started a DVD library, which is proving very popular. Any DVD donations would be gratefully accepted!
Our story sacks and DVD library are funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

At our AGM we also voted on a name for our mascot. Our *panda-ruadh* is very happy with his new name:
Mac.

Thanks to all the children who suggested lovely names, and well done to Andrew and Fraser for coming up with the winning name!

Parents Like Us, 7th-9th May

Our Cròileagan events at the Parents Like Us festival were a great success, entertaining more than 80 children over the two events. The Comann nam Pàrant stall also proved very popular.

The Cròileagan had newly designed leaflets, stickers, and lots of helium balloons, all displaying our new logo. **Mac** got a big vote of approval from our new celebrity friend – Alex from **CBabies!**



Iomairt Ghàidhlig Dhùn Èideann

Iomairt Ghàidhlig Dhùn Èideann (the Edinburgh Gaelic Initiative) was set up earlier this year and is supported by Comunn na Gàidhlig (the Gaelic development agency).

The **Iomairt** held a meeting on 1st June. There are a number of interesting points from this meeting as follows:

- Priorities were set as being: education; uniting the whole of the Gaelic speaking community; raising the Gaelic profile within the city; and identifying the needs of the Gaelic speaking youth of the city.
- A new part-time Gaelic development officer has been appointed for Edinburgh. The name of the appointee will be released next week. The officer will be in post from August.

Help is required in a couple of areas:

- The **Iomairt** would like to develop a recognisable “brand”. The steering group would therefore welcome assistance from anyone with professional experience in branding or logo design.
- It is hoped that premises can be found to give office space for the development officer; and to provide a “shop-front” for Gaelic in the city. Assistance would be appreciated in identifying vacant premises that could be used for this purpose.

If you could give assistance in either area, or if you would like to give any input, you can contact the Iomairt through the CnamP committee: committee@gaelic-education.org

Naidheachdan is produced jointly by Comann nam Pàrant and the Cròileagan to provide information for all parents and friends of Gaelic Medium Education in Edinburgh.

All contributions are very welcome (in English or Gaelic), as are photographs and artwork. Please send contributions to Marion Thompson:
marionthompson@live.com
07968 405 670

Mòran taing to all those who contributed to this issue: Nina Macleod, Rona Lawson, Donald Meek, Valerie MacGregor, Catriona MacGregor, Alasdair Cameron, Ian MacDonald, Fiona Mackintosh, Katie Murray.

Naidheachdan

Edinburgh Gaelic News

June 2010, Issue 3

Mòran taing Mr. Neall!

As all families at Tollcross Primary School will know, our Ceannard (head teacher), Kenneth Neal, retires at the end of this school year.

Mr Neal will certainly be missed at Tollcross. It is lovely to see the genuine affection that pupils past and present have for him, and a great testament to his hands-on approach to the role of head teacher. Parents across the whole school like and respect Mr Neal; and we all appreciate that his excellent management of the school has brought our children many advantages.

Over the next couple of weeks, Mr Neal will be receiving many warm wishes for a happy retirement. In the small space we have here, we would like to pass on a few comments which represent the appreciation of pupils and parents:

The establishment of a Gaelic Medium Unit at Tollcross Primary School in 1988 was an act of faith on the part of a small group of parents who were aware of the potential benefits of teaching the language to their children – and an act of faith on the part of Kenneth Neal too. There were many ‘unknowns’, some obvious ‘risks’, and various hidden hazards, all of which had to be overcome. The concept of the Gaelic Medium Unit was a mere three years old in Scotland at the time, and mistakes were easy to make. The Edinburgh group was indeed fortunate to be advised on its strategy by Dr Donald John MacLeod, then working with Comann na Gàidhlig, and even more fortunate to find a Head Teacher with the vision, commitment, warm heart and practical good sense of Kenneth Neal. Without him, the GMU at Tollcross would never have happened. Even when there were some final hitches and only a tiny intake of pupils, he did not flinch, and across 22 years he has held his

course, as the unit has grown and consolidated itself. Sensitive appointment of teachers (beginning with the exemplary Mona MacLeod, now Wilson), deft handling of education officers, encouragement of pupils and parents – these challenges fell to Kenneth Neal. He met them all. It is a tribute to his vision that some of the first Tollcross GM pupils are now teaching Gaelic in Scotland or in Gaelic-related posts. Those of us who were privileged to know Kenneth in the late 1980s and

early 1990s, and who appreciate all that he has done for Gaelic, want to wish him well in his retirement. He deserves his well-earned rest.

Guma fada a bhitheas do bheatha, a Choinnich chòir, agus guma taitneach a bhitheas gach latha leat. Tha sinn fada, fada nad chomain airson na rinn thu airson na Gàidhlig agus airson ar cloinne.

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(‘We wish you a long life, Kenneth, and we hope that you will enjoy every single day. We are very deeply indebted to you for all that you have done for Gaelic

and for our children.’)
Donald E. Meek, formerly Lecturer in Celtic at the University of Edinburgh (1979-92), and subsequently Professor of Celtic at the University of Aberdeen and Professor of Scottish and Gaelic Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

Mr Neal, Thanks for being such a wonderful head teacher! Every single year with you has been great fun, and very special. Thank you for making my final year at Tollcross especially fun and exciting! I am so glad that I don't have to survive a single year without you. I hope that you enjoy retirement, and I wish you the very best of luck.

Catriona, Clas 7

While researching the history of the Gaelic unit at Tollcross Primary School several years ago, I spoke to many people who worked with Mr Neal and had nothing but high praise for his dedication as head teacher. It was recognised that stepping into a bilingual primary, unique in the Lothians, was no easy feat and the Gaelic staff and volunteers alike respected his success in bringing the two units together into a cohesive, highly regarded and welcoming school. There was never doubt that he cared strongly about the welfare and well-being of all the children under his charge and worked extremely hard to create the best environment for each one. Every success of the school - whether it be its growing popularity or academic and cultural achievements - depended upon Mr Neal's leadership and there was always gratitude for his support. He has, of course, maintained that dedication and can be extremely proud of Tollcross and the success of those he has helped to educate. I think we can join in with parents from all stages of the school's history in thanking Mr Neal most sincerely for the accomplishments that have brought benefit to us all!
Valerie MacGregor

Finally, what will Mr Neal do with his time now? He might have occasionally mentioned a certain football team?

Especially for you Mr Neal - enjoy a happy retirement!



Comann nam Pàrant News

Stay informed over the summer! Make sure you are on our mailing list by emailing your details (name, and the name and class of your children) to:
committee@gaelic-education.org

Remember to check the blog for news updates:

www.gaelic-education.org

As all Gaelic Medium Education parents are aware, last week the Education, Children and Families Committee

of Edinburgh Council released a report on the future development of GME in Edinburgh. The report covered both primary and secondary provision. This report is available on the Edinburgh Council website:

www.edinburgh.gov.uk

under "council papers online", or from CnamP:
committee@gaelic-education.org.

Comann nam Pàrant held a meeting for parents on Monday evening to discuss the report and to gain feedback on parents' views. The meeting was very well attended despite the short notice, and the committee would like to thank everyone for their continued support.

On Tuesday morning, a deputation from Comann nam Pàrant presented to the Education, Children and Families Committee of Edinburgh Council. If you have not received the script of our presentation, a copy is available from CnamP.

The Education, Children and Families Committee asked a number of relevant questions ranging from the benefits of a dedicated school as opposed to units through to the location of the secondary school. We emphasised parental support for a dedicated school, and for remaining at James Gillespie's. We were also able to highlight the importance of building up Gaelic Medium provision at James Gillespie's. For all questions we were able to answer in a clear concise manner which reflected the consensus of opinion on Monday night.

You may also be encouraged to note that Arthur Cormack, Chair of Bòrd na Gàidhlig, backed our stance and wrote to each Councillor prior to the Committee Meeting. A copy of his email is available from CnamP.

The Council report was accepted unopposed.

It was clear to us that we are at a very early stage of the process and that the Committee expects much will be added to the proposals before they go to consultation. Discussions with Scottish Government on funding appear to be a clear priority for the Council.

It is important to make you aware that we were well received and that our attendance demonstrated a commitment and willingness to engage with the Committee to develop Gaelic Medium Education.

We now have time for the Council and ourselves to firm up the proposed options together with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Scottish Government input. Comann nam Pàrant will keep parents informed, and offer opportunities for all to participate in the shaping of our children's future education.

A Lesson in Gaelic

Your child is starting Gaelic Medium Education and you want to learn the language too - but the question is where do you go to do this?

If you put a search in Google for 'GAELIC LESSONS' a whole host of articles, resources and places to look online pop-up - but just how easy is it to find a course that is local to you and more importantly on at a convenient time that fits in with family life?

There are a number of courses available throughout Scotland - **Sabhal Mòr Ostaig** has been running short courses in the Gaelic language for over 35 years at Sleat on the Isle of Skye. These tend to be week long courses and there are different levels of learning.

"Fantastic experience"

Nursery and Croileagan mum, Mary Lye and her family went on one of the beginners courses last year. She said: "I definitely would encourage other parents to go on one of these courses. They are geared toward parents and I found the whole experience fantastic. As well as learning Gaelic we had a brilliant family holiday.

"During the day my husband and I were on the course and the children were in the crèche, then in the evening we all met up for various activities.

"We're planning on doing another course next year."

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) offers a Standard and Higher grade in the language - as increasingly Gaelic is seen as a desirable second language to have. Edinburgh's Telford College also has various courses at different stages of learning which can be done on site or remotely by open learning.

"Less daunting"

Wilma Laird, another Tollcross parent chose Ulpan - a known method of learning a language quickly.

She said: "The Ulpan classes have been great for me, I have been fortunate to have started during my son's first year at nursery allowing us to learn together.

"The focus with Ulpan is on learning short phrases through listening and repeating, then practicing using them in games. The Gaelic grammar is covered but in a less daunting way.

"I have found learning the phrases makes it easier for me to remember the Gaelic and use it again at home. The course has given me the confidence to use Gaelic at some level at home on a daily basis.

Origins

Ulpan has been used to great effect in Israel, where it originated. It has also been used in Wales, where Ulpan has brought thousands of adult learners to fluency in Welsh.

Many adult learners find that they can read and write Gaelic better than they can speak the language. With Ulpan the emphasis is on using the language, so you learn by listening and speaking. Reading and writing are used to reinforce the spoken word.

How can you join an Ulpan class? Some of the Council Gaelic classes are being run as Ulpan classes and other classes are run by freelance tutors. There are a variety of levels running in Edinburgh, and there will be week long courses delivered in various locations throughout Scotland over the summer.

There will be a tutor training course run in Edinburgh in September and there will be some new tutors available to teach following this.

For information on classes and to register for information phone:

Cli` - 01463 226 710 (ask for Mechthild)

Ulpan@cli.org.uk

Cli` Gàidhlig is the organisation that supports Gaelic learning. www.cli.org.uk

Uinneag Dhan Aird an Iar

From the evening of Thursday 24th to Saturday morning 26th June at the National Galleries of Scotland:

Uinneag Dhan Aird an Iar (Window to the West)

A conference exploring the seldom considered visual arts side of Gaelic and Highland heritage, both modern and traditional.

With top names in the arts world as speakers, it promises to be a fascinating redefinition of the visual within Gaelic Scotland.

Lunch and high tea available.

More info from www.nationalgalleries.org (What's On).