

2006 Immersion Weekend

Fàilte gu Carolina a Tuath! [Welcome to North Carolina]

An Comunn Gàidhealach, America (ACGA), is excited to announce a joint venture for 2006 in which the 10th anniversary of the Gaelic Immersion Weekend and the 7th anniversary of the Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week will be merged into one grand event to take place from Sunday, July 2 to Friday July 7, 2006.

Come to the beautiful mountains of North Carolina, a state where Gaelic was still spoken at the end of the nineteenth century. Enjoy language classes for beginner, intermediate, and advanced Gaelic speakers and singing classes covering a range of traditional Gaelic song forms, including waulking or milling songs and mouth music.

Other activities will include a cèilidh, a silent auction, viewing Gaelic videos, and hikes in the beautiful surrounding mountains. The workshop ends just as the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games are getting underway down the road at MacRae Meadows on Grandfather Mountain. As usual there will be a Gaelic tent at the games, and the North Carolina Gaelic Mòd will take place there on the Saturday.

The Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song and Language Week is located at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina in what is known as the “high country.” Banner Elk is located between Boone and Linville in western North Carolina. Lees-McRae College is close to the intersection of Highway 194 and Highway 184 in Banner Elk. The nearest airports are Tri-Cities, TN, and Charlotte, NC.

For the registration form click [here](#).

For more information, contact Libit Woodington at LibitW@aol.com, Cam MacRae at acmacr2@uky.edu, or Jamie MacDonald at jrmacdon@stfx.ca.

Cò bhitheas a' teagasg? [Who will be teaching?]

Kenna Campbell has combined a long performing career with a deep desire to pass on what she herself has learned to younger generations of performers. A trained teacher, Kenna has acquired a highly-respected combination of authority and experience through formal training and through the traditional musical background that has seen her acknowledged as one of Gaeldom's primary musical and cultural tradition-bearers. Hailing from the Isle of Skye and a family of singers and pipers, it would be safe to say that Kenna comes from a very musical family. She won the gold

medal at the National Mòd in Scotland, as did her brother and her two daughters.

Kenna has been principal tutor in Gaelic song at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama since the inception of the degree course in Scottish Music.

Sorley MacDonald is a native speaker from the Isle of Skye and was one of the first pupils to come through Gaelic medium education. He comes from a family steeped in Gaelic tradition on both sides. His grandfather was the well-known poet Sorley Maclean.

Sorley carried on with Gaelic at University, gaining an honours degree in Gaelic and History from the University of Glasgow and is now completing his postgraduate teaching diploma at the University of Strathclyde with a view to becoming a Gaelic and History high school teacher. He has also worked as a presenter on the Gaelic TV program called "De a-Nis?" aimed at 10-14 year olds.

In addition to his Gaelic activities, he is a very keen shinty player having represented Scotland at under 18 and under 21 levels in matches against Ireland.

Dr. Jamie MacDonald currently holds the Ben Alder Chair of Celtic Studies at Saint Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Jamie was raised in North Carolina, his ancestors having arrived there in 1802 from the Isle of Skye in Scotland. There was great interest in his family in its Scottish heritage and he grew up steeped in Scottish culture. He obtained his Ph.D. in Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1993. Jamie is a fluent Gaelic speaker and enjoys singing and collecting Gaelic songs.

He has been a Program Advisor for Gaelic television projects for BBC Scotland and Grampian Television and has published a Gaelic dictionary for children. He was instrumental in the founding of the United States Mòd, the North Carolina Mòd, and the Grandfather Mountain Gaelic Song Week. Jamie has taught Gaelic, Gaelic song and Scottish Studies at seminars and workshops throughout the United States and in Scotland and Canada as well.

Fiona MacKenzie a native of Morayshire and graduate of Aberdeen University, now living in Dingwall, learned Gaelic as an adult and is now employed as the Màiri Mhór Gaelic Song Fellow for Highland Council, a post designed to promote and develop the participation in Gaelic Singing throughout Scotland further afield. She acts as a first point of reference for anyone in the world who requires information on any aspect of Gaelic Song. She won the Silver Pendant competition at the National Mod in 1996, the Oban Times Gold Medal in 2003, and won the highly prestigious An Comunn Gàidhealach Gold Medal for Solo Singing at the National Mòd in Stornoway in October 2005. Her travels during the tenure of the Fellowship have so far taken her to deliver song lectures in Cape Breton, America, Estonia, Ireland, and Germany. 2006 will see her traveling to New York in April to represent Scotland at Tartan Week and also to Washington in September as guest of An Comunn Gàidhealach, America. In December 2004, Fiona was named as the BBC Scotland Traditional Music Personality of the Year for the work she carries out with young people and in December 2005 she was nominated for Gaelic Singer of the Year.

She spends much of her time working with young people and creating opportunities for them to get involved in singing activities. She manages a Youth Vocal Harmony Group called "Fionnar" which is Gaelic for "Cool" or "Fresh" and the group has to date represented Scotland in Ireland and Wales. She also spends much time teaching Gaelic Song in schools and with Community groups. Fiona hosts a Gaelic music show entitled "The Kitchen Ceilidh" on Scottish Internet Radio and regularly has many e-mails from listeners all over the world, in particular from America. The website address is <http://www.internetradio.co.uk>. She is presently working on the publication of a new collection of Gaelic songs based on old pipe tunes, entitled "The Crunluath Collection", the songs have been written by a local Gaelic writer. 2005 saw the publication of "Orain nan Rosach", the first collection of Gaelic Songs from Ross-shire and 2006 will see the production of the follow up CD. She currently has 2 CDs to her name, "Astair", and "Seinn oho ro Seinn"--a Gaelic song teaching resource. Her two sons, Kenneth (17) and Euan (14) are both fluent Gaelic speakers having come through Gaelic medium education in Dingwall and her daughter Katie, 20, is studying Gaelic Song and Clàrsach at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. Husband Donald can occasionally also be persuaded to give a rendition of a good rowing song or two!! The 2 collies, Breac and Brahan have so far not ventured onto stage!

Catriona NicIomhair Parsons is a native of the Isle of Lewis in Scotland. After attending high school at the Nicholson Institute, she received her degree in Linguistics at Edinburgh University. Soon after she graduated, she married Bill Parsons, a ministry student from Roanoke, Virginia and immigrated to the U.S. in 1963. The next year she and her husband lived in Columbia, South Carolina, where she taught English in a high school there. They later moved to Virginia, when she first taught high school and then English and Linguistics at James Madison University. After going back to Scotland for a few years for her husband to finish his PhD, Catriona returned to the US--this time to New England, eventually ending up in New Hampshire, where she taught English and Linguistics at Dartmouth College. Catriona began teaching summer school Gaelic classes at the Gaelic College of Arts and Crafts in St. Ann's Nova Scotia in 1978. While there she produced her noteworthy Gaelic learning course Gàidhlig Troimh Chòmhradh. In 1993, she accepted a teaching post in the Celtic Department at St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where she has been ever since. Professor Parsons was instrumental in the founding of ACGA's National Mòd now held in Pennsylvania and she has served as judge for that mòd on numerous occasions. She is an expert on both Gaelic Language and Song and her knowledge and skills will be an important addition to our course this year.

This will not be her first visit to Banner Elk. In 1985, Catriona taught a week-long Gaelic course at Lees-McRae College in conjunction with the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

Cìsean [Fees]

The workshop is housed at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina. Tuition, room, and board for the Grandfather Mountain workshop in 2006 will be \$425 for ACGA members and \$450

for non-members. There will be a \$20 discount if final payment is postmarked by May 15.

[Click here for the American Registration Form](#)

[Click here for the Canadian Registration Form.](#)

Cuid Oidhche [Room and Meals]

Rooms and meals are provided by Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina, where the week will be held. Both single and double rooms are available and anyone wishing one can have a single room at the same price as a double. Cafeteria meals are quite good and provide a good selection to cater to most diets. A salad bar is offered at almost every meal and an ice cream bar is always available as well. Meals provided are from Sunday evening dinner through Friday lunch. Accommodations and food for the workshop begin with dinner on Sunday, July 2, 2006, and end with lunch on Friday, July 7. Participants will be staying in Virginia Hall.

Further meals and additional dorm room nights are available for a reasonable charge from the college for those staying for the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games.

Clàr-Ùine [Schedule]

Check in will take place from 2:00 to 5:00 on Sunday afternoon. Dinner will be available for those who arrive before 6 pm. Classes will begin Monday and run through noon on Friday. Many opportunities are available for recreation during free time during the afternoon and in the evenings, including optional special interest classes, hiking, swimming, fishing and tennis and watching Gaelic videos.

Siubhal [Travel]

If you will be flying the nearest airports are Tri-Cities, TN and Charlotte, NC. Take a look at the Town of Banner Elk Web site.

Directions to Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, NC, from Johnson City, TN, and the Tri-Cities Airport area:

Take 321 northeast from Johnson City to Elizabethton. From Elizabethton continue east on 19E across the state line to Elk Park, NC. At Elk Park go left on 194 to Banner Elk. As you come to the top of the hill and enter Banner Elk, Lees-McRae College is on your right. Total driving time from Johnson City is about one hour. See *** below for directions to help with finding the dorm.

Directions to Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, NC, from Charlotte, NC and the Charlotte Douglas International airport:

NOTE: These directions are not the same as Mapquest or Yahoo! but are better suited to those not familiar with mountain driving.

Directions to Lees-McRae College from Charlotte airport:

When you come out of the airport, head for Interstate 85 NORTH. Interstate 85 N will soon junction with Interstate 77.

- Take Interstate 77 north. Follow this until the junction with US Highway 421.
- Then take US Highway 421 West until you reach Boone, NC. You are almost there now.
- Simply take Highway 105 south in Boone until you get to the Scottish Shopping Village of Tynecastle where you will see a big sign for Grandfather Mountain.
- There will also be signs there telling you to turn right on Highway 184 to get to Banner Elk. Banner Elk is only a few miles from there and the town is so small you cannot miss the college. When you come to the T-junction at the traffic light (the only one in Banner Elk), turn left. A block up the road you will see a large parking lot on the right. When you are almost past the parking lot, turn left into the college and drive up the road to the stop sign. Turn left at the stop sign and you will see Virginia Hall on your right.

Scenic directions:

From Charlotte Douglas International Airport, take I-485 to I-85 West. Take I-85 to 321 North, at Exit 17. Follow 321 through Hickory & Lenoir to Boone. At Boone, turn left onto Rte 105 at large intersection. Take Rte 105 approximately 15 miles and turn right at the traffic light onto Rte 184 (Tynecastle Hwy). Stay on Rte 184 until it ends at Rte 194 in Banner Elk. Turn left. Lees-McRae College is on the left.

From Rte. 421 in Boone, NC:

Take Rte 105 South approximately 15 miles and turn right at the stoplight onto Rte 184 (Tynecastle Hwy.) Stay on Rte 184 until it ends at Rte 194. Take a left. Lees McRae College is on the left. See *** below for directions to help with finding the dorm.

From Rte. 221 in Linville, NC:

Take Rte 105 North and turn left at the stoplight onto Rte 184 (Tynecastle Hwy.) Stay on Rte 184 until it ends at Rte 194. Take a left. Lees McRae College is on the left. See *** below for directions to help with finding the dorm.

* * *Banner Elk is a small town and you should have no trouble finding the college and the dorm. For those who feel more comfortable with explicit directions, these are step-by-step directions for finding your way. Pass the Student Commons, then Hayes Auditorium, and then a small parking lot--all on the left. (There's a larger parking lot on the right also.) Take the next left and go up a small hill to the stop sign (the Historic Rock House will be on your right.) Take a left. Virginia Hall is on your right. It is an old stone building with a porch between the two arms of the dorm. It is next to the Tufts Chimes Tower and across the street from the campus store. After you unload your belongings,

you will need to return to one of the parking lots that you passed on your way in. You may not park either behind the dorm or beside it unless you have a handicapped sticker.

Roimh-innse na sìde [Weather Forecast]

Temperatures usually range in the low 60's to mid 80's during July. The weather is normally beautiful and cool. However, it can be hot, and it can be cold. It is advisable to bring both a fan for your room and a blanket for your bed. Shorts and lightweight long pants are both appropriate as are short sleeved t-shirts and light weight sweaters. A raincoat or umbrella is also advised just in case the weather doesn't cooperate.

Thoir [Bring]

Dorm Room Items:

- Bed linens and pillow
- Blanket for your bed
- Towels and washcloths
(If you're flying and need to rent bed linens and towels, let us know. There is a \$15 charge for this service)
- Fan for your dorm room
- Desk lamp

Personal Items:

- Casual clothing for both cool weather and warm (see the weather section)
- Walking or hiking shoes
- Swimsuit or fishing equipment
- Raincoat
- Camera
- Flash light (needed for the Opening Ceremonies of the Games)
- Phone for your room and a long distance telephone card. You will have your own private line, but you must provide your own phone.
- Lap top computer, if you wish to use one during the week. College provides a modem line in every room. You must provide your own cables/cords/apparati for connection to the Internet.

Classroom items:

- Gaelic reference books
- Tape recorder or pen and paper for taking notes

Other items:

- Props for cèilidh
- Musical instruments
- Items to donate for Silent auction
- Cash or checkbook for Silent auction—great bargains!
- Dancing shoes if you are a dancer and would like to attend any of the evenings of social dancing at the Thistle School of Scottish Country Dance \$5.00 per night.
- Gaelic Language videos to share with the group at night (examples of videos watched in the past are An Ceasnachadh & The Blood is Strong)