

An Naidheachd Againne

The Newsletter of An Comunn Gàidhealach Ameireaganach / The American Gaelic Society

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Tha Alison Lang a' fuireach ann an Dùn Èideann. Is e ionnsachadh a rinn i air a' Ghàidhlig agus tha i na ball-bùird air buidheann charthannais airson luchd-ionnsachaidh, Cli Gàidhlig (<http://www.cli.org.uk>). Às dèidh dhi a bhith ag obair aig Pàrlamaid na h-Alba agus airson MG ALBA, compàirtiche leis a' BBC ann san t-seanail telebhisean BBC ALBA, tha i a-nis ag obair air a' ceann fhèin mar sgrìobhadair. <http://www.alisonlang.co.uk>

A very fluent Gaelic learner, Alison Lang lives in Edinburgh. In addition to her primary work now as a free-lance writer, she is a board member of the non-profit organization for learners Cli Gàidhlig (<http://www.cli.org.uk>). She has previously worked for the Scottish Parliament and for MG ALBA which partners with the BBC in the television channel BBC ALBA. For more about her books and other writing (along with excerpts), see <http://www.alisonlang.co.uk>

Dùn Èideann a' Feitheamh le Alison Lang

Tha Dùn Èideann na bhaile a' feitheamh. Air dè? Nan cuireadh tu a' cheist air duine àbhaisteach ann an Sràid a' Phrionnsa is math dh'fhaoidte gun canadh e, "Air na tramaichean," a' gearan mun sgeama chòmhdhail ùr a tha air meadhan a' bhaile a chur troimhe chèile fad còig bliadhna a-nis. Neo is dòcha gum biodh neach-turais a' tomhas, "Air an Fhèis Eadar-nàiseanta?" Agus chanadh luchd-poileataigs – cuid aca, co-dhiù – "Air neo-eisimeileachd."

Ach tha Gàidheil Dhùn Èideann a' feitheamh

Edinburgh in Waiting by Alison Lang

Edinburgh is a city that's waiting. What for? If you were to ask the ordinary man in Princes Street he might say, "For the trams," complaining about the new transport scheme that's been causing chaos in the city centre for five years now. Or perhaps a tourist would venture, "For the International Festival?" And politicians – some of them, anyway – might say, "For independence."

But Edinburgh's Gaelic speakers are waiting too, waiting for a new primary school, for a new professor in the university and for some progress for Gaelic in the capital as a result of the local authority's new plan. We could be on the brink of a new era.

Some would say that Glasgow is the capital city of Gaelic. There's a bigger population of speakers there, about 10,000 in the 2001 census when you take the City of Glasgow and the surrounding areas together. But with 4,000 in Edinburgh and a further 3,500 in Lothian, the Borders and Fife, the east of the country isn't completely devoid of Highland culture. The results of the census conducted in 2011 are due to be published this summer. That's something else the Gaels are waiting for, and we'll soon see if numbers have risen or fallen.

But whereas Partick has the historical reputation of



Pàrlamaid na h-Alba / Scottish Parliament

Alison Lang

cuideachd, a’ feitheamh air bun-sgoil ùr, air ollamh ùr san oilthigh, agus air adhartas airson na Gàidhlig sa chathair-bhaile a’ leantainn air plana ùr an ùgh-darrais ionadail. Dh’fhaodadh linn ùr a bhith air faire dhuinn.

Chanadh cuid gur e Glaschu prìomh bhaile na Gàidhlig. Tha slugh nas motha an sin a tha ga bhruidhinn, mu 10,000 ann an cunntas-sluaigh 2001 eadar Baile Ghlaschu fhèin agus na sgìrean timcheall air. Ach le 4,000 ann an Dùn Èideann agus 3,500 a bharrachd ann an Lodainn, na Crìochan agus Fìobha chan eil taobh sear na dùthcha buileach as aonais blas Gàidhealach. Thèid toraidhean a’ chunntas-sluaigh a rinneadh ann an 2011 fhoillseachadh as t-samhradh am bliadhna. Sin rud eile air a bheil na Gàidheil a’ feitheamh, agus chì sinn a dh’athghearr a bheil na h-àireamhan air fàs neo air crìonadh.

Ach ged a tha cliù eachdraidheil aig Partaig mar “sgìre Ghàidhlig” Ghlaschu, tha Gàidheil Dhùn Èideann air a bhith sgapte. Chan eil àite againn a thathas ag aithneachadh mar chridhe na coimhearsnachd agus is beag an t-iongnadh gu bheil seo air buaidh a thoirt air ìomhaigh na Gàidhlig sa bhaile. Mura tèid thu a-mach ga lorg, agus fios agad càite am faigh thu lorg oirre, cha chluinn thu facal dhi.

Ann an dùthchannan eile, bhiodh e annasach mura robh cànan nàiseanta follaiseach sa chathair-bhaile, ach shaoileadh an neach-turais nach robh ach Beurla ga bruidhinn an seo. Is ann glè ainneamh a chithear Gàidhlig sgrìobhte air soidhnichean, mar eisimpleir, ach fo Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) 2005 tha uallach air buidhnean poblach planaichean aontachadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig airson leasachadh a’ chànain san obair aca. Mean air mhean tha sinn a’ faicinn adhartas – cuid a bhuidhnean a’ toirt orra fhèin ainm oifigeil Gàidhlig, mar eisimpleir, agus ga chleachdadh air litrichean agus làrach-lìn – ged is e adhartas slaodach a th’ ann.

An dèan a’ bhun-sgoil ùr diofar do choimhearsnachd Dhùn Èideann? Às dèidh bhliadhnaichean fada den strì airson sgoil fa leth, mar a th’ aca ann an Glaschu agus Inbhir Nis, bidh Bun-Sgoil Taobh na Pàirce a’ fosgladh san Lùnastal 2013. Thuige seo tha na sgoilearan Gàidhlig air a bhith ann an ionad sònraichte an taobh a-staigh bun-sgoil Bheurla, suidheachadh nach robh freagarrach tuilleadh ...

being Glasgow’s “Gaelic quarter”, Edinburgh’s Gaelic population has always been more dispersed. There is no district that’s recognized as the heart of the community and it’s small wonder that this has affected the image of Gaelic in the city. Unless you go out

looking for it, and unless you know where to find it, you won’t hear a single word spoken.

In other countries, it would be considered odd if a national language lacked prominence in the capital city, but a tourist could be forgiven for thinking that English was all that was spoken here. It’s very rare to see

Gaelic written on signs, for example, but under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 public bodies have a responsibility to agree plans with Bòrd na Gàidhlig to develop the inclusion of the language in their work. Little by little we’re seeing progress – some organizations adopting an official Gaelic name, for instance, and using it in correspondence and web pages – although this progress is pretty slow.

Will the new primary school make a difference for Edinburgh’s Gaelic community? After long years of campaigning for a separate school, such as exists in Glasgow and Inverness, Parkside Primary School will be opening in August 2013. Until now the Gaelic scholars have been in a special unit within an English primary school, a situation that was no longer acceptable ... and indeed, it had ceased to be acceptable ten years ago, when the Council was less well disposed towards Gaelic than it is today.

In respect of primary school education we’re lagging behind Glasgow and Inverness, but when it comes to higher education Edinburgh University was ahead of the other universities when it established the first Chair of Celtic in Scotland 130 years ago. That chair that has been vacant for more than three years, but at long last a new incumbent is now being sought to fill it.

The students and teachers are waiting for their new professor, and the schoolchildren are waiting for their newly refurbished building. It’ll be good if the Gaelic community is strengthened by these developments, but a Gaelic community can’t be created by waiting and waiting for new institutions or official leadership



Pàrlamaid na h-Alba / Scottish Parliament

Alison Lang

Scottish Studies Campaign

While the University of Edinburgh's move to fill the long-vacant chair of Celtic is to be welcomed, there are fears that the university's plans to relocate the School of Celtic and Scottish Studies to new premises with severely limited library space could separate students and staff from the unique archive of books, recordings and other ethnographic materials currently held by the department.

Some of the archive's recordings have already been digitized by the Tobar an Dualchais project, but this work remains incomplete. It had been proposed that much of the School's archive would be taken off-site where it would no longer be available to researchers or to the public. A student campaign to maintain the integrity of the collection and ensure continued access has attracted widespread support, and the university has now responded by committing funds to improve access. The campaign leaders describe themselves as cautiously optimistic, but further clarification of plans for the archive's future is awaited at the time of going to press.

You can follow the campaign on Facebook and Twitter or by visiting <http://scottishstudiescampaign.wordpress.com/>

agus gu dearbh cha robh e freagarrach bho chionn deich bliadhna, nuair nach robh a' Chomhairle idir cho bàidheil ris a' Ghàidhlig 's a tha e an-diugh.

A thaobh foghlam bun-sgoil tha sinn air dheireadh air Glaschu agus Inbhir Nis, ach a thaobh foghlam aig àrd ìre bha Oilthigh Dùn Èideann air thoiseach air na h-oilthighean eile nuair a steidhich iad a' chiad Chathair Cheiltis ann an Alba bho chionn 130 bliadhna. Tha a' chathair sin air a bhith bàn a-nis fad còrr is trì bliadhna ach thathas a-nis a' sireadh ollamh ùr mu dheireadh thall.

Tha oileanaich agus òraidichean a' feitheamh air an ollamh ùr, agus tha a' chlann-sgoile a' feitheamh air an togalach ùr-sgeadaichte aca. Bidh e math ma thig piseach air neart na coimhearsnachd Gàidhlig air sàilleabh nan leasachaidhean seo, ach cha ghabh coimhearsnachd Ghàidhlig a chruthachadh le bhith a' feitheamh agus a' feitheamh airson ionadan ùra neo stiùireadh oifigeil neo toraidhean cunntas-sluaigh. San eadar-ama bidh luchd na Gàidhlig sa bhaile a' dèanamh na rinn sinn daonnan ... a' tighinn ri chèile, dithis neo triùir, neo barrachd uaireannan, agus a' bruidhinn ar cànan bho latha gu latha ... no cho tric 's a tha cothrom againn.

Is e dùbhlann a th' ann, gun teagamh, ach tha oisean an siud 's an seo far a bheil cànan beag-aithnichte Albannach ga bhruidhinn ann an cathair-bhaile na dùthcha. Ged a bhios a' mhòr-chuid coma mu deidhinn, tha a' Ghàidhlig beò fiù 's ann am mòr-bhaile na Beurla.

or census results. In the meantime, Gaelic speakers in the city will do what we've always done –coming together, two or three of us, or sometimes more, and speaking our language from day to day ... or as often as we get the chance.

It's a challenge, undoubtedly, but there's the odd pocket here or there where a little-recognized Scottish language is spoken in the country's capital. Though the majority of the population may be quite indifferent, Gaelic is alive even in this great English-speaking city.



*Bun-sgoil Taobh na Pàirce / Parkside Primary School
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Links to online ACGA resources

Main ACGA Website: <http://acgamerica.org/>
ACGA Forum: <http://forum.acgamerica.org/>
ACGA Facebook Page: <http://facebook.com/ACGAGaelic>
ACGA Twitter Feed: <http://twitter.com/ACGAGaelic>

You may comment on this article (and others like it) in the following ACGA Sub-Forum:
<http://forum.acgamerica.org/viewforum.php?f=51>

AN NAIDHEACHD AGAINNE

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An Naidheachd Againne welcomes submissions. Contact the editors for more information.



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