

Newsletter Winter 2008

An t-Alltan: Gaelic teachers' conference from Stòrlann

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Happy Christmas from all at Stòrlann!

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An t-Alltan: Gaelic teachers' conference from Stòrlann



One hundred teachers from primary and secondary schools throughout Scotland came together in the New Drumossie Hotel in Inverness on 8 and 9 October to explore new resources and related learning and teaching developments. There were opportunities to try out new software, debate methodology and contribute to new developments. The conference was opened with a reception at which **Hamish Fraser**, the Chairman of The Highland Council's Gaelic Committee, welcomed the new developments which are creating exciting opportunities at the present time for young Gaelic speakers, such as wholly Gaelic-medium schools and the new Gaelic digital channel '**BBC Alba**'.

Conference papers and audio files are available on www.storlann.co.uk for those unable to attend.



8th, education conference, Drumossie

it was here one might think our tribe was lost on the field of death - but just hear each living tongue shaping new shoots of growth

Aonghas Dubh MacNeacail

"It is very important that teachers get the opportunity to meet with each other at a conference like this.



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Keynotes

- **Gaelic and Gaelic-medium Education:** Murdo MacIver, North Lanarkshire Council and Rosemary Ward, Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- **The Teacher as Resource:** Joan MacKay, HMle

Seminar

- **Literature, Poetry and the jump to Creative Writing (primary):** Anne Lorne Gillies
- **Synthetic Phonics for reading and writing:** Donald John MacLeod and Johan Byrne
- **Language structures in the Primary School:** Mairi Kidd, Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig
- **Shared Reading and Writing:** Mary MacMillan, Learning and Teaching Scotland
- **Immersion, with a Welsh perspective:** Cathie Johnstone and Morfudd Roberts, The Welsh Assembly
- **Literature, Poetry jump to Creative and Folio Writing (secondary):** Rachel Sandilands and Aonghas 'Dubh' MacNeacail

- **Language structures in the Secondary School:** Catriona Murray, Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig and Christina Walker, Aberdeen University
- **Teaching Science and Mathematics through the medium of Gaelic:** Angus John MacDonald, Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig
- **Ceumannan: new materials for learners:** Emma Christie, Shona Cormack and Gillebride MacMillan, Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig

Skills Workshops

- **Using Textease software:** Alan Stewart, The Highland Council
- **Using Kar2ouche software:** Ray Shaw, Immersive Education
- **Using Special Needs Assessment Profiles, 'SNAP', in Gaelic:** Archie MacLullaich
- **Accessing Resources online:** Marion MacDonald, Gàidhlig air-loidhne



Stòrlann would like to thank the following for their support in terms of funding, computer equipment etc: The Highland Council, Learning and Teaching Scotland, Fèisean nan Gàidheal, UHI Inverness College, Charleston Academy, The Scottish Government, Bòrd na Gàidhlig. Thanks also to the staff of the New Drumossie Hotel.

“We have been waiting for an event like this. Very encouraging. There is a lot I can use in the class.”

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New materials in schools...

These materials were delivered to schools in recent months:

- **Kar2ouche 'Daoine Ainmeil ann an Eachdraidh'**
Software for creative writing and history teaching
- **'Lorgan Litreachaidh: 'Leabhar an tìdeir', 'Faclair Pearsanta 1' and bookmarks**
The first stage in a new spelling programme
- **Heinemann Scottish Maths: Series 4 workbooks**
Reprint
- **Taigh Lachaidh**
Five interactive language games for computer or smartboard
- **Shared Reading posters**
Six posters demonstrating different writing styles, with accompanying notes
- **Catriona air Chuairt**
A big book and storysack about an inquisitive cat and her friendly neighbours
- **Magnetic letters for learning support**
Gaelic phonic blends
- **Smeòrach Mi**
Poetry anthology
- **A' Chaileag Starraig': novel**
Lily's is finding life challenging but her odd new friends help her in lots of unexpected ways
- **Textbooks on Textease**
Disk of 'Bunaitean Cruinne-eòlais' and a second of 'Cùisean,' simplified in terms of content and language
- **Beatha le Buaidh**
A new series comparing the lives of famous people with different factors in common, including Ant 'n Dec and Laurel and Hardy and Ronaldo and Maradona



In the works...

... these materials will be delivered to schools in the coming weeks:

- **Uamh nan Cnàmhan**
A novel about a climber lost in the mountains
- **Europe Wallmap**
- **Droch Ràith Mairead', 'Droch Shaoghal BJ' agus 'Shenanigans Shen'**
Three short novels with accompanying CDs
- **Linn nan Caochlaidhean Mòra**
History textbook from Imprint
- **Kar2ouche 'Sgrìobhadh Cruthachail'**
- **Fuasgail is Freagair 1, 2 agus 3**
Big Books for Maths
- **Dòigh Eile air a Ràdh**
Reprint
- **An Gille a Dh'èigh Madadh-allaidh**
Big Book for Shared Reading
- **Mus Tuit an Oidhche**
A creepy doubler-novel for teenagers
- **Sàr Obair Ire C**
- **Mo Chreideamh**
A whiteboard pack examining major world religions
- **Cùrsa airson saidheans D agus E**
- **GLPS Boardgame**
- **Aonadan Eachdraidh airson S1, 2 agus 3**
- **Playscripts**
Based on well-known short stories



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We've taken big 'steps' with this project recently and the team is very busy moving things along. A panel of teachers has agreed the shape and content of the course and a taste of what's included is provided:

Ceumannan 1

1. Dè an t-ainm a th'ort?
2. Ciamar a tha thu?
3. Cànan a' chlas
4. Dè an aois a tha thu?
5. Càit a bheil thu a' fuireach?
6. Dè an dath a th' air?
7. Dè tha nad bhaga?
8. Dè latha a th' ann an-diugh?
9. Dè as toigh leat anns an sgoil?
10. Dè an uair a tha e?
11. Seo mo theaghlach
12. A bheil peata agad?
13. Dè tha thu ag iarraidh?

Ceumannan 2

1. A' bhodhaig
2. Cò ris a tha thu coltach?
3. Dè 'n obair a th' agad?
4. Dè na cur-seachadan a th' agad?
5. An do chluich thu ball-coise Diluain?
6. An cuala tu an t-òran ùr?
7. An cluich thu ball-coise?
8. An tèid thu dhan sgoil?
9. Am faigh mi cofaidh?
10. Cò às a tha thu?
11. Cò ris a tha an t-side coltach?
12. An taigh agam
13. Am baile



Emma Christie, the course Writer, is locked in a cupboard finishing the first book, which will be with the designer in a couple of weeks. Emma's computer is red hot and the materials look really engaging and exciting. There is work included for many different ability levels and there are lots of important features to support learners:

- **Wordlists** in each unit and at the end of the book
- **Sùil air ais** – extension work at different levels
- **Cultar** – a different subject at the end of each unit, including placenames, history, stories and much more
- **Taic** – tips for learners
- **Ceum air cheum** – lists of what each module covers with examples to help with revision
- **Ceum a bharrachd** – more challenging exercises for very able pupils

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Ceumannan – a new course for learners

We've kept an eye on Curriculum for Excellence developments and we hope that the course will ease some of the burden on teachers who so often have to prepare all of their own learners' materials.

Gillebride MacMillan is preparing online materials to support the course and we hope that the materials prove as much of a hit with pupils as they did with teachers at An t-Alltan. Gillebride demonstrated some of the sites he uses to create resources at the conference and the new site will link to these materials to allow learners to create their own multi-media resources. They'll be so busy enjoying themselves that they'll learn the language without noticing!

Have you ever tried 'rap'? No? Well, here's your chance. **Shona Cormack has written a little rap based on the commands in the unit 'Cànan a' Chlas. Here are the words; find yourself a bit of room and a hoodie and you're all the way!**

*Thuirt an tidsear ris a' chlas:
Madainn mhath dhuibh, thigibh a-steach
Dùinibh an doras, suidhibh sìos
Bithibh sàmhach 's èistibh!*

*Cuir dhìot do sheacaid, leugh an leabhar
Bi modhail, Uilleim, sin gu leòr!
Seadh ,a Chaluim, dè tha ceàrr?
Am faod mi peansail fhaighinn?*

*Sgrìobh is èist is bruidhinn is leugh
Tapadh leat is tapadh leibh
Cuir dhìot do sheacaid, sin thu fhèin!
Glè mhath, 's math a rinn thu!*

We now have funding to complete Ceumannan 1 to 3 and we hope that the first book will be in schools in time for teachers to have a good look through the materials before the beginning of the new session. You can find out more from Shona on shonacormack@storlann.co.uk



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Smeòrach Mi

Smeòrach Mi: the first Gaelic poetry anthology to put 'a foot in the door of the 21st century'

Back in April, BBC Craoladh nan Gàidheal and Stòrlann joined up in the Beeb's new headquarters at Pacific Quay in Glasgow to launch two exciting new poetry resources.

BBC's new site 'Làrach nam Bàrd' looks closely at the writing of eleven Gaelic poets, including Sorley MacLean, Derick Thomson, Anne Frater, Meg Bateman and Dòmhnall Ruadh Chorùna. At the launch the audience heard from a number of poets through the audio files on the site and from one 'live' poet, Aonghas Dubh MacNeacail, who joined the gathering and launched the resources.

Aonghas Dubh also features prominently in 'Smeòrach Mi', Stòrlann's new poetry collection. He reminded the audience that, during his own schooldays, only Watson's 'Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig' was available and he warmly welcomed the collection and the site. He reserved a special mention for the previously unpublished poets appearing in Smeòrach Mi. This was echoed by Ronald Black in his review in The Scotsman on 12 July, in which he said that Smeòrach Mi was an 'extremely attractive' production.

Rachel Sandilands, the editor of 'Smeòrach Mi', explained that Stòrlann aimed with the collection to introduce pupils to a wealth of voices and she expressed her hope that readers would enjoy the collection. Her own pupils had been very vocal in offering their opinions, although she did reject their suggestion that the book be titled 'Mo Chreach 's mo Bhàrdachd'!



“
The first Gaelic poetry anthology to put a foot in the door of the 21st century, and it is very attractive indeed.
”

**Ronald Black
The Scotsman**



There are new resources now available on the website www.gaelic4parents.com. There are audio files to accompany all titles in the literacy scheme 'Storyworlds' and parents can freely download and copy these for use with their children. There are further cards and signs for downloading and colouring, to help in creating a Gaelic-speaking environment in the home. The interactive game 'The Heart Crystal' takes children on a quest through a magical land where there are riddles to solve using a mixture of skill, logic and Gaelic language.

In the 'community' section of the site, parents can chat to support workers who are online for up to two hours per schoolnight to answer questions relating to homework support. The 'community' is a secure area on the website and families can create their own homepages and can chat, share pictures and other material.

Logins and usernames for parents of all children in Gaelic-medium primary education are available from schools.



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New staff...

Shona Cormack took up post as Development Officer for Gaelic/Gàidhlig in the secondary school at the beginning of April. Shona came to **Stòrlann** from Portree High School and since she arrived she has been heavily involved in the development of the Ceumannan learners' course.

Working with Shona on 'Ceumannan' is **Emma Christie**, who also came to **Stòrlann** from Portree High School. Emma is writing the course materials, with support from **Gillebride MacMillan**, who is creating online materials to go alongside the textbook element.

Stòrlann also welcomed **Marina Mhoireach** to the team. Marina will be supporting parents as part of the homework support service on www.gaelic4parents.com/community. Marina hails from Lewis and she will be working closely with **Anne Marie Henderson** who has been with the project since it first began last year.

And some farewells...

Johan Smith left **Stòrlann** in October after more than seven years with the company, when she and her family moved to Edinburgh where her husband is a student in the Free Church College. Johan will be greatly missed at **Stòrlann** and the board and staff all thank her for all of her hard work over the years. We wish Johan, Calum, Joanie and Marissa every happiness in their new home.

Stòrlann also thanks **Dolina Smith** who spent the summer with us through Comann na Gàidhlig's student placement scheme. Dolina is now enrolled on the PGCE course in Aberdeen University where she is training as a Biology teacher.

Seumas MacTaggart left his part-time job as an online support worked on www.gaelic4parents.com/community in the summer. Seumas' support was most welcome in setting up the service and our warm thanks go to him for all of his work.

and congratulations!

Anne Marie Henderson gave birth to Elliot MacKenzie Henderson on 12 November 2008. Mamaidh and bèibidh are both doing well!

Funding

Additional funding for Stòrlann from the Scottish Government

There was excellent news for **Stòrlann** at the beginning of this financial year as an increase in the level of Specific Grants for Gaelic Education resulted in additional funding for the company. The additional funding of almost £100,000 per annum will allow **Stòrlann** to expand its programmes and facilitated the delivery of 'An t-Alltan' in October.



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Ceum air cheum...

In September the staff of **Stòrlann** undertook a 52-mile sponsored walk to raise funds for the **Bethesda** hospice in Stornoway. The team walked from Stornoway to Tarbert in Harris. The plan was then to walk from Uig to Portree in Skye but after around five miles it became clear that the road was too dangerous. The team transferred over to Braes and completed the same mileage there instead.

The aim of the walk was to allow remotely working staff to spend time with their colleagues in order to build links within the team. This was a valuable exercise given the mixture of sunny and not-so-sunny days encountered. All concerned agreed that the sun was shining especially brightly when the team finally reached Portree!

To date Stòrlann staff have raised around **£5,000** for Bethesda and there are still monies to be collected.

We would like to thank the following for their help with **Ceum air Cheum**:

MacKinnon Self Drive, Lewis
Portree taxis - Kenny MacPherson, Harry Dick and Willie MacLeod (A1 Cabs/Vital Signs)
MacKenzie's Bakery, Portree
Jan MacDonald, Kensaleyre Church of Scotland
Lochs Community Centre, Leurbost
Marmalade, Portree
Radio nan Gàidheal, Isles FM and BBC Alba
Everyone who stopped and gave us donations on the road
All who pledged money beforehand



ceum air cheum
troimh na h-eileanan
2008



Faite do
dh'Eilean Leodhais
Welcome to the Isle of Lewis

