

AN CUAIRTEAR CEILTEACH

Foghar 2009

Autumn 2009

www.stfx.ca/academic/celtic-studies/

New Celtic Studies Newsletter



2009-10 VISITING IRISH PROFESSOR

We are pleased to announce that we will be hosting visiting Irish professor Séamus MacFloinn this year. He will be teaching CELT 110 and 210 (First and Second year Irish), and 361 (Irish Folklore).

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Séamus MacFloinn (with Éamon Ó Cuív)

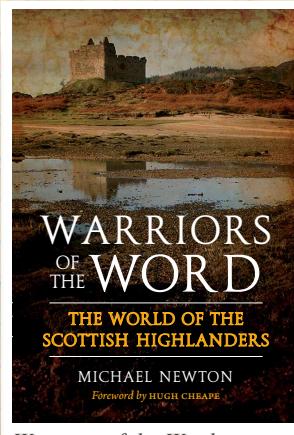
MACLEAN SYMPOSIUM

On May 14-16, the Celtic department hosted the MacLean symposium. Attendees listened to several talks focussing on the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Alexander MacLean Sinclair of Glenbard, Antigonish. Speakers included Drs. Michael Linkletter and Kenneth Nilsen of the Celtic Department.

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Professor Kenneth Nilsen speaking at MacLean symposium.



Warriors of the Word

BOOK LAUNCH

Celtic Studies department professor Michael Newton launched his new book, *Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlanders*, at the Antigonish Highland Games on July 18th.

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Tuairisgeul a' Cheannaird, an t-Àrd-Ollamh MacNill

Notes from the Chair, Dr. Kenneth Nilsen

The past year 2008-09 was a good one for the Department of Celtic Studies. In July 2008, the department hosted *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 5* – the Fifth Scottish Gaelic Research Conference and the first to take place outside of Scotland. The conference was well attended by international scholars and over fifty academic papers were delivered.

Last year we also welcomed to our department a new colleague Dr. Michael Newton. In addition, four students from Scotland came to StFX for the fall semester under the terms of our exchange program with Sabhal Mór Ostaig, the Gaelic college on the Isle of Skye.

Our departmental offerings were further augmented by the presence of Simon Innes, who with support from the government of Ireland, was hired to teach First and Second-Year Irish Gaelic and Early Gaelic Religious Literature.

Early in the academic year the faculty and students of the department and members of the Celtic Society made their annual visit to Glen Bard cemetery where the Bard MacLean, Alexander MacLean Sinclair and former Celtic Department chair Major Calum Iain MacLeod are buried.

Another highlight of the fall semester was a poetry reading by Lewis MacKinnon, CEO of the Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs, followed by a céilidh for Celtic students and society members.

We were visited in November by a delegation of Members of the Scottish Parliament representing the four main

political parties (shown below), whose presentation fostered much debate.



The third annual Celtic honours students symposium in which students presented the results of their honours theses was held in the winter. At convocation Ed MacDonell became the first recipient of the Father Malcolm MacDonell Award in Celtic Studies.

In May, the Celtic Department co-hosted with Clan MacLean a symposium in honour of the Rev. Alexander MacLean Sinclair (described further on the following page).

Last year Dr. Nilsen offered a new course, CELT 161 (Introduction to Modern Welsh). The class had an enthusiastic group of students and we even put several Welsh songs on YouTube (check it out!). CELT 161 will also be offered again this year (2009-10).

During the course of the year Dr. Nilsen continued with video interviewing of Gaelic speakers. In December he traveled to Scotland where he attended a meeting of Scottish Gaelic Dictionary committee at Glasgow University and visited the School of Scottish Studies at the

University of Edinburgh to consult their archives.

In March he traveled to Toronto where he taught at a Gaelic language day and also took time to visit a Cape Breton Gaelic speaker who lives there. He participated in several Gaelic weekends at the Gaelic College in Cape Breton.

He completed work on two papers: “An Ghaeilge in Oirthear Cheanada: 1700-1900” (The Irish Language in Eastern Canada: 1700-1900) to be published in a collection of essays in Ireland and “A’ Ghàidhlig an Canada: Scottish Gaelic in Canada” to be published by the Edinburgh University Press in a volume entitled *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language*.

In August Dr. Nilsen traveled to Ireland where he visited relatives in Newcastle at the foot of the Knockmealdown Mountains in County Tipperary to gather family history for a paper he is doing on his grandmother’s brother, James Cullinan, who had a fair amount of native Tipperary Irish. He then went to Connemara where he interviewed a number of Irish speakers on the topic of Gaeltacht emigration to North America.

Be on the lookout for Celtic events in the next few weeks. These will include the annual visit to Glenbard and an opening Celtic lecture and céilidh.

*Beannachd leibh!
Slán go fóill!
Hwyl fawr!*



Unveiling of the Alexander MacLean Sinclair collection in the Rare Book Room.



Susan Cameron at unveiling

MACLEAN SYMPOSIUM

A symposium about Gaelic scholar Rev. Alexander Maclean Sinclair, a native of Glenbald, Antigonish County, was organized by the Clan Maclean Association of Atlantic Canada and the Celtic Studies Dept. Speakers included Dr. Rob Dunbar, Dr. John Sinclair, Dr. Alasdair Sinclair, Dr. Michael Linkletter, Dr. Kenneth Nilsen, and Susan Cameron.

The Chief of the Macleans, Sir Lachlan, in the centre of the picture above, attended the event; to his right are John Sinclair (grandson of Rev. Alexander) and his wife Evelyn, who donated an important collection of books that belonged to Alexander Maclean Sinclair in two phases: (1) religious books, donated Autumn 2008, and (2) Gaelic books and books about ethnology, philology, Celtic Studies, and other topics. The new donations augment our already significant collection of material from Sinclair's personal library acquired over the past number of years from his descendants.

VISITING IRISH PROFESSOR

This year we are pleased to announce that the department will once again have a fourth member. Séamus Mac Floinn, with the support of the Ireland-Canada University Fund, will be

teaching CELT 110 (First year Irish), 210 (Second-Year Irish) and 361 (Irish Folklore).

Séamus Mac Floinn received a BA from University College Dublin and went on to complete an MA *sa NuaGhaeilge* (Modern Irish) at the same university. His thesis examined and compared key themes in the writings of Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn of Leòdhlas, Scotland and of Máirtín Ó Direáin of Inis Mór Co. Galway. His areas of interest include Scottish and Irish Gaelic cultural comparisons and the Gaelic literature of Oriel in north-eastern Ireland.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclean Sinclair (1840-1924) published fifteen volumes of Gaelic poetry between 1880 and 1905, and was a Celtic Studies lecturer at St.FX and Dalhousie from 1907 to 1912.

Student activities and opportunities

COMUNN CEILTEACH

An Comunn Ceilteach, StFX's student Celtic Society, enjoyed a busy year last year. The end of year concert featured Gaelic singer Lewis MacKinnon (CEO of the Nova Scotia Office of Gaelic Affairs) and fiddler Colin Grant. Many StFX students performed other music and dance entertainment.

The funds raised by the society enabled the Celtic Department to send two students, Jason Bond and Ed MacDonell, to Sabhal Mór Ostaig (the Gaelic college in Scotland) to study Gaelic this summer.

The Society organizes many social events and activities through the year, such as the Celtic Film series, *Samhainn* (Hallowe'en) social, and numerous céilidhs (music parties).

SCOTLAND EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

StFX recently arranged an exchange programme with Sabhal Mór Ostaig, a

college on the Isle of Skye in Scotland which teaches all courses through the medium of Scottish Gaelic. Last year we had four Scottish students who visited us and we strongly encourage StFX students to take advantage of this arrangement by spending a term or year there in their third year. You'll need to be fluent in order to take all of your courses in Gaelic – so start preparing now!

GAElic CHOIR

The Antigonish Gaelic Choir is being rejuvenated under the direction of Stephanie Johnston. Students at StFX are encouraged to join other members of the community to learn and sing Gaelic songs, with performances expected between Christmas and the end of the academic year.

The choir will meet on Tuesday evenings at the chapel of St. Paul's Anglican Church on Church Street from 6:30-8 PM, starting on September 22nd.

Please bring a pencil with an eraser and a binder for handouts. If you have questions, contact Stephanie at sjohnsto@stfx.ca or 735-5369.

IRISH STORYTELLER

We will be visited by Irish storyteller Batt Burns on the 19th of October. After performing for the Irish folklore class, he will offer a lecture about Irish folktale traditions. Details to come ...



Fiddlers at the Comunn Ceilteach Concert, April 2009



Milling at Latha Gàidhlig 2009.



Dr Michael Linkletter on the Island of Tiree

DR MICHAEL LINKLETTER

After classes finished in April Dr. Linkletter's activities included teaching at the Gaelic immersion weekend at StFX hosted by the Celtic Studies Department and presenting a paper in May at a symposium at StFX on nineteenth-century Nova Scotia Gaelic scholar Alexander Maclean Sinclair, co-hosted by the Celtic Department and the Clan Maclean Association of Atlantic Canada.

Dr. Linkletter is currently developing his work on Alexander Maclean Sinclair into a manuscript for publication and spent the month of June at Edinburgh University and the National Library of Scotland combing through manuscript catalogues and nineteenth-century newspapers for writings by Maclean Sinclair.

Dr. Linkletter also spent time on the Isle of Tiree during his trip to Scotland; highlights include speaking with some of the native Gaels of Tiree, visiting the birthplace of the bard John MacLean (grandfather of Alexander Maclean Sinclair), and visiting the grave of famous Gaelic folklore collector and author John Gregorson Campbell. Dr. Linkletter took part in a symposium on Gaelic Networks (1750-1914) hosted by the Department of Celtic at Glasgow University.

In July Dr. Linkletter returned to Canada and spent a week in the Public Archives of Prince Edward Island looking for Maclean Sinclair material and working on an article on Gaelic place names of PEI. Dr. Linkletter also spent a week in Cape Breton in early August attending Stòras a' Bhaile, a Gaelic event hosted by the Highland Village in Iona.

This academic year Dr. Linkletter will be teaching four courses: Celtic Civilization I & II, 2nd-year Scottish Gaelic, and a new three-credit course—Celtic Paganism.

In October Dr. Linkletter will be presenting a paper entitled “The Early Establishment of Celtic Studies in North American Universities” at a Celtic Studies conference at Harvard University.





At Dunnottar Castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland



Signing books at Antigonish book launch

DR MICHAEL NEWTON

The 2008-9 academic year was Dr. Newton's first at StFX. He was busier than expected because between classes and creating the new Celtic Studies website he was finishing a massive new book, *Warriors of the Word: The World of the Scottish Highlanders*, which was published this summer by Birlinn Ltd of Edinburgh, Scotland. He launched the book at two events, one at the University of Edinburgh on June 3rd, and later at the Antigonish Highland Games on July 18th.

In May he presented the talk "Macs and Micmacs: First Encounter Narratives in Scottish Gaelic from Nova Scotia" at the *Migrating Minds* conference at the Institute for Scottish and Irish Studies at the University of Aberdeen and completed a full length article this summer on this topic.

While in Scotland Dr. Newton spent time in the archives of the School of Scottish Studies and the National Library of Scotland searching for Gaelic materials, especially related to Highland immigration and immigrant communities in Canada. After returning to Antigonish he followed up on these research activities at StFX itself.

He used some of this new material in another article he wrote this summer, entitled "To the Tartan": Text, Textile, and the Negotiation of Highland Identity in North

America" for the forthcoming volume *From Tartan to Tartanry* from Edinburgh University Press. He also finished the article "Celtic Cousins or White Settlers? Scottish Highlanders and First Nations" based on the talk he gave at last year's *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig* conference.

He is currently writing an article on Gaelic literature in 20th century Scotland and North America, and has begun an anthology of Scottish Gaelic writing from Canada to appear in 2011.

This year Dr. Newton will teach CELT 100 (1st year Scottish Gaelic), 340 (Scottish Gaelic poetry survey), and 362 (Gaelic folklore of Scotland and Nova Scotia). He is particularly excited about 340, which charts the development of Scottish Gaelic poetry from about the year AD 600 to 1800. This summer he created a supplemental booklet to accompany the coursebook *Cothrom Ionnachsaidh* in CELT 100; it adds dialogue-oriented vocabulary to the coursebook and explains some of the more obscure issues in the book.

He is planning an international conference about Celtic peoples in the Americas for summer 2011.

"If I were a book,
I'd want to live in
the StFX Celtic
Collection amongst
some of the most
important literary
artefacts in the
Celtic languages –
even if they smell a
little musty."

Tuairisgeul na Ban-Chamshronaich – Celtic Collection Report, Susan Cameron

I would very much like to encourage people to come and visit the collection and see for themselves first hand the valuable resources. The Angus L. Macdonald Library established this collection in 1965 with the opening of the building, and it continues to grow in scope and size. It is considered to be a first rate collection which is valued by scholars world wide.

We also provide a welcoming space to study, research and meet up with like minded people. While there are many electronic resources available to help with the research process these days, it is still worthwhile to come and view and use print collections. The field of Celtic Studies is multidisciplinary and this Special Collection reflects that. There are also some primary source materials and pamphlet file material for those who wish to extend their exploration of topics.

You will also find that many Celtic Studies resources are also housed in the

Main Library. The advantage to this is that these items may be borrowed. The online Library Catalogue will clearly identify the location for you.

I am available to help with your research and welcome the opportunity to be of assistance. We will have open hours posted on the door and the website for the coming academic term. Some materials are restricted to the main reading room in the collection, but many items can be signed out for use in the main library, this extends access to the materials to coincide with the Main Library hours. We are located off the Hall of the Clans on the Library's third floor. Please feel free to contact me at 867-5328 or scameron@stfx.ca

A few new books of note include:

Katherine Simms, *Medieval Gaelic Sources*, Four Courts Press, 2009. DA 933 .S565 2009

John Shaw (Trans./Ed.), *Blue Mountains other Gaelic Stories from Cape*

Breton / Na Beannaithean Gorma agus Sgeulachdan Eile a Ceap Breatainn, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007. GR 113.7 .S36 B58 2007

Neville Kirk, *Custom and Conflict in 'the land of the Gael': Ballachulish 1900-1910*, Merlin Press, 2009. DA 890 .G55 K57 2009

Michael Newton, *Warriors of the Word: the World of the Scottish Highlanders*, Birlinn, 2009. DA 880 .H6 N498 2009

Eugene Hynes, *Knock: the Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, University of Cork Press, 2008. BT 652 .J73 H95 2008

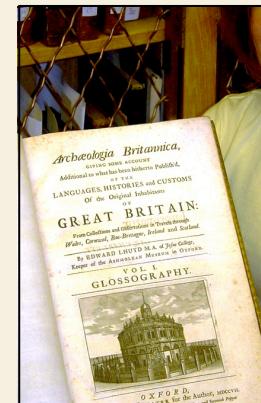
Frank Ferguson & James McConnel (eds.), *Ireland and Scotland in the Nineteenth Century*, Four Courts Press, 2009. DA 950.1 .J734 2009

Katherine Campbell, *The fiddle in Scottish Culture*, John Donald, 2007. ML 878.7 .S36 C36 2008

Subject Research Guide (Celtic Studies) <http://stfx.libguides.com/celticstudies>
Celtic Collection website http://library.stfx.ca/collections/celtic_collection/index.php



Students conducting research in Celtic Collection of Angus L Macdonald Library.



Archaeologia Britannica