GAELIC – A PAST & FUTURE PROSPECT

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Kenneth MacKinnon

SALTIRE

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INTRODUCTION

A CONSTANT GROUND

What is the relevance of the Gaelic language in Scotland today?

Is there any general public image of its place in the story of the Scottish people – or any sense of its significance in everyday modern life? In the history books it is too often little more than a footnote if it is anything at all – in modern life perhaps an anachronism. For the mass, if they are watching the right channel at the right time it is a peculiarity on the fringe of national life and pretty much for the fringe alone.

And yet there is a sense in which the Gaelic language is a part of the personal identity and everyday life of almost every Scot. More than that, the language is at the root of the very entity of what came to be called Scotland – indeed the very reason why it is recognised as such and called Scotland today: the

land of the Scots, the Gaelic-speaking people who came over the sea from eastern Ulster, and established their kingdom and their language throughout what we now know as Scotland and even beyond. That is why, even today, there are few Scots who do not bear either a surname or a forename of Gaelic origin, or who do not live, work or travel past places every day whose names go back to that language.

Lowland Scottish speech itself originated in the contact between Angles and other incomers and the Celtic peoples who were here already. Of Anglo-Celtic rather than Anglo-Saxon in origin, it is still readily distinguishable from the Standard English of today. In these and many other ways, Gaelic lives today upon the lips of all Scots whether or not they realise it or whether or not their education or the media enable them to recognise it.

The continuing and living culture handed on to us through the Gaelic language has important implications not only within Scotland but also far beyond. The continuity of Gaelic extends unbroken from its origins in Ireland, throughout Scotland's history, and today beyond Scotland's borders wherever the descendants of the Gaels have spread and settled. Of all Scotland's distinctive institutions, it is this language and the culture which derives from it, which most effectively defines an ethnic identity for the Scots as a people at home and abroad. It is tragic that so early in Scotland's modern history English replaced Gaelic as the language of the majority of her people. Nevertheless, this essentially Gaelic character underlies much of what is distinctive in Scottish national life. The national costume originated in Gaelic dress. The national drink is Gaelic in name. Both the Scots Language and Scottish English show influences of Gaelic as the original language of the Scots. For in all these ways, Gaelic is woven into the fabric of Scottish history and society as the red or green ground underlying the setts of the many individual tartans, or the *ùrlar* (vein) running through all the variations of the *pìobaireachd* of Scottish history. It is that constant ground underlying the whole of Scotland's story. Remove it and its influence and Scotland is merely North Britain.

Gaelic is seen in the modern myth as surviving as the everyday language of a handful of hardy crofters and fisherfolk battling out a marginal existence in a remote if romantic corner of the country. Nothing particularly central to the life of the nation – and no special measures are necessary since the Gaels are now virtually all bilingual anyway. No civil rights issues, no problems in making yourself understood, and no ethnic minority complications. So there is nothing much to worry about – nothing like the fuss in Wales, where the language is significant throughout the country. Romanticised and tartanised, Gaeldom's symbols decorate shortbread tins. Devoid of its people, the landscape of Gaeldom features on calendars and Christmas cards.

The reality is that Gaelic is spoken throughout Scotland today. There are moreover almost as many Gaelic speakers in the Lowlands as the Highlands, and almost as many in the cities as in the islands. A century ago the Highland counties contained over three-quarters of all Gaelic speakers, but in 1981 this area had shrunk to under 60%. In fact, the vast majority of Gaelic-speakers do not live in 'Gaelic-speaking areas' at all. By 1981, the truly Gaelic areas

where over three-quarters of the population speak Gaelic contained only one in four of all Gaelic speakers, the others being encountered just about anywhere else you were likely to go. And although the crofting community continues to encapsulate the core of Gaeldom, modern crofting of necessity entails a life-style capable of combining with any other occupation of the modern world.

The miniscule size of the Gaelic community – there are around 80,000 speakers of the language today – might indicate a language which is very rapidly on the way out. Decline there has been – from around a quarter of a million a century ago – but the 1971 and 1981 censuses witnessed an arrest of this decline, with some encouraging growth-points. Numbers were down to 80,978 in 1961, but ten years later had climbed back to 88,892 (an increase of almost 10%). Although numbers fell back to around their 1961 level in 1981 (79,307 speakers of Gaelic, 82,620 with speaking, reading and writing abilities), for the first time ever numbers and proportions of Gaelic speakers increased in the principal Gaelic areas of the Western Isles and parts of Skye. Another encouraging feature was the growth of Gaelic abilities amongst young people in those areas where there had been Gaelic teaching schemes in the schools, and where there was work for their parents. There is a success story here and a lesson for the language.

Today there is a thrusting new spirit concerning the language which says that despite the putting down of the language in the past, and despite the decades of neglect, it has survived and its recovery will be regained. Recent years have seen an upsurge of interest in the language in Scotland and beyond.

The nationwide dimension of Gaelic reminds us that the language is an essential and defining aspect of Scotland's heritage. Perhaps the next step is to secure proper official recognition and its rightful place in the national culture. If it is merely seen as relevant only in the ever-decreasing 'Gaelic-speaking area' of the far northwest, its doom is sealed. If it is recognised as part of the living heritage of all Scots, it is a language with its part to play in a Scottish future.

Gaelic life and culture have a message for the world. The continuing story of the Gaelic people is a story of adaptation in the face of adversity. But they have not always been in retreat. Their present homelands were actually retaken from the Norsemen in the early middle ages, and with the decline of Viking seapower, the Gaels replaced them. The seafaring tradition continues strongly today.

Gaelic culture has been influential in the wider world. Gaelic speakers brought the Christian faith, literacy and humane learning to their pagan neighbours in the days of the Celtic Church, ending the Dark Ages in the northern Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The Irish scholar Alice Green regarded them as having 'taught the English the letters they still use'. The influence of this church of the Gaels extended as far afield as northern Italy and Kiev and, in Lord Clark's words, saved civilisation 'by the skin of its teeth.' Its language was by the 11th century the principal *lingua franca* of Scotland. Throughout subsequent centuries we note the Bruces urging Scotland and Ireland to common cause as the Scots and the Irish shared a common origin and 'spoke the same language'. Gaelic was the language used at the Parliament which Bruce convened at Ardchattan. Poets, historians and other

writers in Lowland Scotland up until the 16th century readily acknowledged Gaelic to be the true and original Scottish language. For Walter Kennedy, *'it suld be al trew Scottis mennis lede.'* (*'Flyting with Dunbar'* c. 1500).

In later ages Gaelic transmuted a rich folklore into a high culture – and back again. Following the breaking-up of Gaelic society, Gaels went forth to colonise new lands, settle new countries and to carry their faith and their culture to distant parts of the world and play their part in the founding of new nations. And within their homeland time and time again, the Gaelic people have adapted to changing circumstance. The collapse of the independent Lordship of the Isles was followed by the formation of the clan system so often romanticised today. With the suppression of the bardic schools and the severance of the link with Gaelic Ireland during the 17th century, Scottish Gaelic culture was thrown back upon its own resources. In the 18th century the conflict on three continents of England and France used Scottish Gaels, North American Indians and the peoples of South Asia as pawns in world politics. The aftermath was the destruction of the clan system, forced migration, and recruitment for cannon-fodder in Britain's imperial wars. The Clearances, which followed in the 19th Century as capitalism 'improved' the Highlands, swept away the last remnants of traditional local autonomy and created a vast desert of sheep-runs, deer forests and grouse moors out of the homeland of the Gaels.

Yet time and time again they rallied. The political power of Gaeldom was destroyed: the Gaels rewove

their traditions and their spiritual life. Their high culture was suppressed: the Gaels transformed their learned traditions into a popular culture. The clans were destroyed: a New Scotland was established overseas. New lairds attempted to place their own nominees in spiritual authority over the people; the people repudiated the false shepherds and flocked to their own. Through the Gaelic message of a spiritually awakened people, the Gaelic cause in secular and political life established a measure of security for the Gaelic people within their own homeland and they evolved a new social order: the crofting community.

Gaeldom today faces new challenges. Migration has continued to take its toll of the young and the innovative, and they have been encouraged to seek their careers outwith the home community, only to find their subsequent return economically daunting. New forms of economic activity in the *Gàidhealtachd* have always been associated with the intrusion of English. Education, the mass- media and administration have typically in the past been controlled from the outside and gave little heed to the local language. Modern transport systems have separated island from island, glen from glen: its patterns are laid down for easy interpenetration from the outside rather than for internal convenience, thus connecting the divided parts of the *Gàidhealtachd* to different outside centres. Although tourism, forestry, and extractive industries have threatened Gaeldom because their direction has been from the outside, the Gaels have used them to make some security for themselves and their way of life. Today there is a new willingness to use modern technology to work for the interests of Gaeldom, and to enable young people to have the

means to use the benefits of new techniques and higher education within their own communities: to establish new enterprises and new forms of communication. Gaelic is no longer just the language of the loom and the spinning-wheel, but the language of the word-processor, the computer and the video.

In all this there exists the latent possibility of further transformations of Gaelic society. The mistake of development policy in the 1960s and '70s with the establishment of the Highlands and Islands Development Board was in attempting to bring the Highlands into the Industrial Revolution, which was regarded as a good thing and one which had largely bypassed the region. A policy of establishing 'growth-poles' was envisaged as providing the focal points for economic stimulus in their hinterlands. Large-scale industries were extended or established in Caithness, Lochaber and around the Moray Firth: nuclear power generation, aluminium smelting, pulp-milling, rig- fabrication. There were further prospects of oil-refining and petro-chemical industries based on them. These last never came, for by the 1980s the policy was conspicuously failing. Smelters and fabrication-yards closed, and even the prospects of the nuclear industries post-Chernobyl looked decidedly shaky. Nuclear waste dumping was then floated as their replacement.

The fact that the Industrial Revolution did not fully transform the Highlands and Islands is now very much an advantage in a 'post-industrial society' (or more properly a 'post-first-industrial-revolution society'). For the relatively pollution-free environment provides an opportunity for new manufactures which require high levels of purity and freedom from

contamination. And the crofting system could readily form the basis of an alternative local economy utilising the energy-rich environment for sustainable new combinations of manufacturing and food-production.

Basically what stands in the way of that is that the necessary research and development have not yet been done. In many respects though the local economy is 'post- industrial' already – and this is for once to its advantage, if only it can be realised. 'Conservation' has sometimes been falsely contrasted with crofting – as if corncrakes and crofters had not co-existed in Uist for centuries, or in some way opposed to local employment – as if a multinational whisky company could not easily have dug its peat without disturbing white-fronted geese in Islay. Exploitation by outsiders has not generally produced stable local economies anyway. A sustainable local economy is not so much a *conservationist* as an *ecologically sound* economy – and such economies will sustain both crofters and corncrakes.

Such concerns are relevant to what this book is principally about. Its central problem is to explain how the original language of the Scots failed to become their national language of today, and why Gaelic is not referred to as Scots or Scottish in the same way that the Gaelic language of Ireland is called Irish by speakers of English. The historical process and the manipulation of ideas are very much bound up with the exercise of power and economic domination, as indeed is the language used to legitimate such processes and the languages spoken by the people involved in them.

This book is also intended as a discussion of the

problems of the present-day Gaelic community and to raise issues concerning its future. This book is therefore not a history of Gaelic literature, nor is it an account of the historical development of Gaelic as a language. Others have concerned themselves with these matters, and the bibliography directs the interested reader to studies in these fields. Literature and linguistics are closely linked to social processes – and indeed they cannot fully be understood unless they are related to the social history and historical sociology of the speech-community. This book is a first attempt at the social history and sociology of the language. And above all, it is concerned to apply these considerations in arguing a case for the retention of Gaelic in the Scotland of the future, and to suggest strategies which might assist this objective.

My concern in this is not that Gaelic should be 'preserved' or 'revived', but for it to flourish. Neither am I concerned with arguments about ideas of racial, linguistic or national 'purity'. I am much more interested in the study of a culture which has maintained itself and persisted in association with one of Europe's oldest literary languages, throughout centuries of persecution, neglect, denial of rights, extermination and clearance of its speakers, social and geographical disadvantages, and yet has survived to the present day. If Gaelic has been a 'dying' language, it has tenaciously resisted its oppressors. Gaelic and its culture have responded to their circumstances in development and adaptation. The language and its culture have given me much pleasure and delight. I have no wish to see them pass away in my lifetime or my grandchildren's. Rather I would wish to see them gain new life and flourish.

There are some who equate an interest in Gaelic culture with nostalgia, antiquarianism and narrow nationalism. 'It is an attempt to put back the clock.' (Although we should do just that if the clock is wrong.) I believe that Gaelic and its associated way of life, its literature, its social institutions and the values of its speakers spell out a story of adaption to change and autonomous development which have an important message for mankind. In this lies the distinctive Gaelic character whose heritage has value and relevance for the future. The conclusion of the book is a personal view of the ways in which the language and its culture are relevant to our present circumstances, of value to the world community and of importance for the future.

An Tòisigheachd, An t-Eilean Dubh, An Dàmhair, 1990
Ferintosh, The Black Isle, October 1990.

PART 1: ORIGINS – THE LION'S TONGUE

THE COMING OF THE SCOTS

Child to parent, child to parent over some fifty or sixty generations from the Scots of today would bring us back to an Irish tribe, the Féni, whose kingdom of Dalriada in Northern Ireland started to expand into the Western Highlands and Islands from about 200 A.D. onwards. In time these settlers – the *'Scotti'* from 'Scotia' – Ireland – came to outnumber their fellow countrymen of Ulster and their kings from the days of Fergus Mór mac Erc from about 500 A.D. onwards ruled from Argyll *(Oirthir Ghàidheal* – the Coast of the Gaels), and from this base this people came to give their name and their language to Northern Britain. The Kingdom of the Scots is now merged in the British State, and in 1981 Gaelic was spoken by some 80,000 only of the Scots. Yet the story of this community and its culture is a continuing one. It is not, as yet, 'ane end of ane auld sang'.

As a way of life the culture of the early Scottish kingdom was probably little distinguished from that of other peoples of Dark Age Britain. However, they were probably better organised socially and militarily, as one of their surviving chronicles the Senchus Fer nAlban seems to indicate. Also from the point of view of ideas, values and ideologies these people were the first in post-Roman Britain to take up Christianity and the corpus of learning associated with it. Thus we may claim for their language, after the languages of classical Greece and Rome, to be the oldest living literary language of Europe.

It was Columba – *Calum Cille* – who brought Christianity to the Scots of Alba and the Picts of Caledonia and established humane learning in these parts of Britain. From 563 A.D. onwards, from his base in Iona, Columba's activity extended to convert first the Scots, then the Picts, the kingdoms to the south, those of northern, eastern and midland England and further afield throughout central and eastern Europe. The Columban church developed a high culture whose remains we can see today in magnificent illuminated manuscript books such as the *Book of Kells,* believed to have been made in Iona, and the Lindisfarne Gospels, as well as in marvellously carved crosses, reliquaries and metalwork. On the less material side, intense missionary zeal brought Christian values, literacy and learning to peoples such as the Anglo-Saxons as far south as London and even Sussex.

In Northern Britain at this time four ethnically distinguishable peoples occupied the land: the Scots themselves, Gaelic in speech and Irish in origin, occupying the coasts and islands from Kintyre north-

wards; the Picts, a native people whose speech may have resembled that of the Britons but whose origins are not completely clear, occupying the interior and eastern coasts north of the Firth of Forth; the Britons, speaking a form of early Welsh, occupying the central valley and southern Scotland; and the Angles of the English kingdom of Northumbria extending southwards from the Lothians. Amongst the Scots we know that social organisation was strongly kinship based – a characteristic not altogether dead today. Succession lay not through the direct line but to the male best fitted to inherit, the *tanaisdear.* Defence – and in the earliest days occupancy of territory were undertaken by *fianna,* armed warrior bands led by an heroic chief. From these earliest days, surviving chronicles in Gaelic ('Old Irish' but equally shared by Scotland), saga literature, and some surviving orally transmitted Ossianic ballads tell us much concerning the organisation of the people, their customs and values.

The Church was organised into family-like communities of priest-monks. Their abbots or leaders might be termed bishops but they had no diocese in the modern sense. They might take the whole of the known or reachable world for their parish. Gaelic-speaking missionaries and monks travelled the North Atlantic, Britain and Europe as far as Italy and Kiev. These were the people making up the vital link as culture-bearers who restored civilisation to Europe. Their cultural influence can be seen in the northern English kingdoms; a Northumbrian king Aldfrid (d. 708) was one of the leading Gaelic poets of the 7th century, *Fland Fina mac Ossu.* These cultural influences can further be traced to Alcuin and the culture he brought with him from northern England to the

Court of Charlemagne and to the refugee monks fleeing from the Sack of Iona by the Vikings, welcomed at his court. Before the reversal of influence of the Gaelic church at the Synod of Whitby, Gaelic had become a principal *lingua franca* of northern Britain.

The Scots absorbed their neighbours, the Picts, possibly by a union of crowns through a common heir. The Gaelic-speaking state extended across the whole of Scotland north of the Clyde-Forth line; after 844 A.D. the succession of Kenneth Mac Alpin produced the first king of the Picts and Scots. Gaelic seems to have supplanted fairly rapidly whatever language the Picts spoke in this early period, for the combined military and political strength of the Picts and Scots spread Gaelic speech into the Welsh-speaking area of southwestern Scotland (Strathclyde) in the following centuries and also into the Anglian region of the Lothians. Following the Battle of Carham (1018) the Gaelic Scots had achieved pre-eminence throughout the area we know today as Scotland and – for a time – beyond, into Cumbria and Northumberland. The occurrence of Gaelic speech in these areas is witnessed by surviving placenames. Up until this stage, the only reversion to the Gaelic speech community was in the Northwest, where Viking settlements established Norse speech in the Northern Isles, Hebrides and Northwest seaboard. With the exception of Shetland, Orkney and Caithness where Norn survived into the modern period, a mixed Norse-Gaelic community came into being: the 'Gall-Gael'. Gaelic dress (adopted for example by Magnus Barelegs) and Gaelic names and naming customs were readily taken over and the incomers were after a while effectively Gaelicised. It is in fact the descen-

dants of these people who are the present-day surviving Gaelic speech-community.

Gaelic influences in the Church survived the Synod of Whitby and the eventual recognition of the religious supremacy of Rome in Scotland. The secular bardic orders and schools were organised in three grades: *Ollamh* (doctor), *fili,* (master), and *bard* (bachelor) and the three ranks within the Columban church were similar in appearance: *seniores, operarii fratres* and *alumni.* Great store was set on learning and appointments within the church lay in the gift of the *ferleighinn* (man of learning) – an office which survived in Scotland into the 13th century.

By the 11th century, therefore, Gaelic clearly came to be the language of social dominance throughout Northern Britain – perhaps dominating generally north of the Tweed, with a cultural influence extending at least to the Tyne. It was the language of an impressive culture which had influenced Anglo-Saxon England and beyond – had indeed brought literacy to the English, and brought civilisation back to Europe. Gaelic was the language of the Scottish state, its royal house, the language of learning and the church. Through Gaelic the arts of writing, scholarship and classical civilisation had been returned to much of Britain and the continent. In the Scottish society of the 11th century, Gaelic was the medium through which government and administration were carried on. An integrated Gaelic society had come into existence in Northern Britain, deciding its own affairs, influencing the course of world events.

For what reasons therefore did the displacement of Gaelic come about? Why did Gaelic fail to maintain itself as the national speech of the Scots? For from the

mid-11th century Gaelic was already in the process of being shifted out of these positions. We take it so much for granted that today the Scots are an English-speaking people that references – say, in Bede – to the speech of the Scots fails to register upon the general reader that this was other than the Scottish English of today or an earlier variant of it. A dramatisation of the life of St Margaret on schools radio some years ago for instance, failed to convey the fact that St Margaret came to a land and a court in which English was a completely foreign and alien language, known only to those few who had travelled or had relations with the English kingdoms far to the south. Yet, unless such facts are effectively conveyed, how can we give faithful impressions of our origins and life and relationships in earlier times?

It is undoubtedly misleading to read back into the circumstances of the 11th century such modern concepts such as national and official languages. But Gaelic at that time predominated throughout most of what we now call Scotland and was the language of its rulers. We do not know to what extent Gaelic was widely spoken throughout southern Scotland. Gaelic certainly established itself in Ayrshire and Galloway. In the southwest the Britons had spoken a similar Celtic language and placenames show that hybridisation of Gaelic and early Welsh occurred. 'British' speech seems to have survived, though, at least until the reign of David I (1124-1153) in Strathclyde. Elsewhere in the southwest a shift from British to Gaelic forms of speech was probably general. In the Lothians Gaelic was initially a superimposed form of speech: the language of the governing class and the everyday speech of particular villages and centres –

perhaps those which have retained their Gaelic names to the present day. However, surviving documents show that Gaelic was in use amongst ordinary people well into the middle ages – serfs, for example, having typically Gaelic names.

At this point Scotland, the land of the Scots (those who spoke Gaelic) had come into being, governed by a Gaelic-speaking monarchy ruling through a Gaelic-speaking court and extending its influence throughout a predominantly Gaelic- speaking nation by means of seven provincial rulers, the *Mormaers* (great stewards) heads of great Gaelic houses and through them to the *toiseachs* (thanes) of each local district. What is now to be accounted for is the shift to English, the speech of its southern neighbour and traditional enemy in the medieval period, by a people who remained politically and militarily independent. Why and how did the Scots trade in the language of saints and scholars for English as the language of the Scottish State?

THE RISE OF SCOTTISH NATIONHOOD

Gaelic was closely bound up with the formation of Scottish nationhood. This should not be a surprisingly outrageous idea. But if it is so, it is because we have lost sight of the fact that Gaelic was the principal language of civilisation, culture and government in early medieval Scotland. If today Gaelic is on the fringes of national life, this fact should not blind us to the reality that in the national life of Scotland in the early middle ages, Gaelic stood at the centre.

As has been noted, the shift of Gaelic from this central position began from the mid-11th century onwards; but the process was gradual and the account of this shift spreads over several centuries. Probably to the people of the times no appreciable change was occurring; yet inexorable changes there were and, as the centuries passed, these changes gathered momentum.

Although Gaelic began to be displaced first in central and southern Scotland, writers as late as the 16th century show us how slow and how partial this process had been. John Major, writing in 1521, states that 'most of us spoke Irish a short time ago' and that by his day 'one half of Scotland speaks Irish'. Hector Boece (circa 1527) dates the coming of English to Norman influences and the subsequent settlement of Englishmen and to *'jeopardeis and chance of battall'*, for *'those of us who live on the borders of England have forsaken our mother tongue and learned English, being driven thereto by wars and commerce but the Highlanders remain just as they were at the time of Malcolm Canmore in whose days we began to adopt English'*. Sir Thomas Craig, writing during the reign of James VI, recalled from personal memory substantial survival of Gaelic-speaking communities in Stirlingshire and Dunbartonshire. Other later commentators, for example Kennedy, in his *Flyting with Dunbar,* blame the heavy loss of life occasioned by the treachery of the Earl of March and Dunbar in the Wars of Independence.

There were at least five chief ways in which Gaelic Scotland was culturally penetrated by Anglo-Norman England after 1057. The first of these – and perhaps not the most important – was the court itself. When Malcolm Canmore *(Calum Ceann Mór* – Calum Big Head) came to the throne he had spent some years in refuge in England. He took as his bride, Margaret, the grand-daughter of Edmund Ironside of the Wessex and English royal house. Margaret had spent her earlier years in exile in Hungary before she and her brother, Edward Atheling, representative of the Saxon royal line, took refuge at the court of Malcolm III. Unlike most Scotsmen of the time, Calum was

unusual in that he 'knew the English language quite as well as his own' and thus he was able to act as interpreter between his queen and the Scottish bishops. St Margaret's influence in anglicising the Scottish royal house may have been overstressed. England came under Norman-French influences after 1066 and William had little cause to refrain from making war upon a power which had welcomed the representatives of the legitimate English royal house. What Margaret did achieve was a heightened demand for new lines of trade – luxury goods as we might today say – chiefly taking the form of embellishments for the churches. This stimulated trading relations with England for goods not able to be supplied at home. However, it is also clear that Scottish institutions were increasingly feudalised from this time on and this seems to have been associated with the settlement of Anglo-Normans who were granted lands by the crown. Here again, we must remember these incomers were French – not English-speaking – and Isobel Grant, and later authorities such as John Bannerman, drew attention to the mass of evidence indicating substantial survival of Gaelic in personal names in the documents of central and southern Scotland throughout the middle ages.

There was a substantial survival too of Gaelic public officials (for example the *brehon*: the *britheamh* or judge; the *toiseach:* the thane or steward; the *ferleighinn* or man of learning) as well as Gaelic forms of taxation and land measurement within feudal lowland society. Medieval life in Scotland, whether 'highland' or 'lowland', was underlain by the retention and adaption of Gaelic institutions. Scotland adopted aspects of feudalism that were felt autonomously

necessary, unlike England where an alien feudal system was imposed by conquest. For example, there was no manorial system in Scottish feudalism.

Secondly, then, feudalisation in Scotland imported new social concepts, new terms, new forms of social organisation and the influx of new people, often resulting in co-existence of new and old ways for considerable periods of time. Feudalism linked with Norman penetration of Scottish society, got well under way by the reign of David I (1124-1153). As Norman-French speech gave way to English among the landed classes in England, so it may be imagined a similar shift occurred amongst their kinsfolk in Scotland. That French gained ascendancy in the Scottish court is clear. There was no direct shift from Gaelic to English.

English itself came into Scotland by way of very different classes of people: originally through the Angles of Northumbria who had annexed and settled Lothian, and in the middle ages by merchants and tradesfolk from England and the Low Countries. Burghs began to be established in the 11th and 12th centuries. These were really trading posts and market stances. William of Newburgh, writing in 1174, described how they were established and run by foreigners of whom the Flemings were the most important. These merchants from the Low Countries spoke a Germanic dialect not very different from the English of those days. Through the establishment of burghs in central and eastern Scotland, much of Scotland's overseas trade came to be in the hands of Flemish and English-speakers.

The Scottish capital or seat of the royal court had traditionally been located in the Gaelic heartland of

Perth and Fife. (For example at Dunkeld, Scone, Perth or Dunfermline.) With the passage of time, the royal House of Canmore relocated the court within the partially Anglian Lothians, thus strengthening the anglicising trends in the speech of the Scottish court when they came.

Lastly, as the result of war, the occupation of parts of southern Scotland by English forces provided further language contacts in favour of English. There were English refugees who settled in Scotland after William harried Northern England. It is probable also that casualties among the Gaelic-speaking forces of the Scottish state reduced the Gaelic-speaking population of southern Scotland, removing many of its leaders and perhaps leaving the surviving womenfolk to marry amongst the incomers.

The operation of these five factors together first brought about a shift from Gaelic to French in the court, the royal family and some of the principal nobility. Next, a shift to English speech seems to have extended from the Lothians into the Western Lowlands and outward from the burghs along the coastal plain of the northeast, assisted by the 'plantation' of the Gaelic province of Moray. The evolution of Lowland Scots from the Anglian speech of the Lowlands started to take place but as the community language shifted from Gaelic to English, Gaelic influences remained embedded in popular speech giving to Lallans its distinctively Scottish characteristics. In like manner, the customs and folk beliefs of the lowland people remained strongly Gaelic.

Gaelic was superseded as the everyday speech in Central Scotland between 1157 and 1400. Exactly when is difficult to say, because written documents

survive in Latin, French, and then English. As English began to be used for official documents in the 12th century the evidence for survival of Gaelic amongst the Lowlanders lies in the use of Gaelic personal names which these documents record. In the Northeast Lowlands Gaelic certainly remained the everyday speech and the 'official' language as the Book of Deer records land grants during this period in Gaelic. Barrow (in Gillies, 1989) has recently shown how tenuous Gaelic was during the middle ages in this part of Scotland. Gaelic was evidently displaced fairly rapidly in the south and later in the east. In the southwest the survival of Gaelic into the 18th century is a matter of historical fact. Here, in Galloway and Carrick, the language certainly survived as a vernacular in general use into the 16th century and in more isolated pockets throughout the 17th century. It has been claimed also that Gaelic communities survived in Fife up to this time.

As Gaelic speech and its associated customs and way of life were displaced in southern Scotland there were some spirited rearguard actions. We cannot project our present-day ideas backwards into the past and say that these were Gaelic revolts aimed at re-establishing Gaelic at the centre of national life or promoting a Gaelic revival as such. However, there were substantial revolts against an Anglo-Norman establishment conducted by Gaelic-speaking leaders and mobilising Gaelic-speaking areas of the country. No doubt they did desire to re-establish the supremacy of their own people and their own way of life. Their struggle was not simply one to conserve an older way of life. For example, Fergus, the Prince, Lord or ruler of Galloway, a leader of two Gaelic

rebellions, was widely travelled in England, Wales and Ireland and introduced innovations into the church organisation of the southwest in the times of David I.

With Gaelic support Donald Bane (Domhnall Bàn – Donald the Fair) seized the crown from his brother Malcolm II in 1093. Twice in the reign of David I (1124-53), Fergus of Galloway revolted against Norman influences in court and state. During the same reign a revolt of the Gaelic province of Moray was also put down (1130). Moray again revolted in 1187. At the Battle of the Standard (1138), a motley army containing each of the chief ethnic groups under the rule of David I King of Scots faced the forces of the northern English barons. The army comprised, according to Richard of Hexham: 'Normans, Germans, English, Northumbrians, Cumbrians, men of Teviotdale and Lothian, Picts who are commonly called Galwegians, and Scots'. The most Gaelic of the native nobility Malise *(Maol-Iosa)* of Strathearn championed the rights of the Gaelic Scots to lead the battle and so each ethnic group fought in separate order – with disastrous results. In the ensuing rout of the 'Scottish' army, the Scots – the Gaelic speakers – turned alike upon the other ethnic groups fleeing with them. By 1234 the Gaelic principality of Galloway was finished. The death of Aidan, the last lord, without male heir resulted in a final rebellion which was subdued by Alexander II.

This was far from being the end of Gaelic power in Scotland. With the steady decline in power of Norway, the mixed Gaelic- Norse people of the Hebrides and Northwest asserted themselves and established a principality which was effectively independent of the

King of Scots throughout the rest of the middle ages. The Lordship of the Isles had its origin in the Viking kingdom of Sodor and Man. About the middle of the 12th century a leader emerged in this area called Somerled *(Somhairle)* who seized much of the Scottish possessions of the last Norse King of Man, and established himself by force-of-arms as 'Regulus and Thane of Argyll', having achieved supremacy throughout the Western Isles and coastlands from Kintyre and Bute northwards. Until the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493 and the subsequent failure of Clan Donald and its allies permanently to revive its powers and rights in the 16th century there thus remained within Scotland a centre of Gaelic power and an integrated Gaelic society, acknowledged even by Lowland writers to have best preserved the manners, speech and customs of the Scots. Bishop Leslie said, writing in 1578, that the Highlanders to *'this day speik the ald scottis toung, planelie have the selfe sam maneris ... that nocht oulie ... they have keipet the toung hail uncorupte; bot lykewyse the maner of cleithing and leiving*'.

During the middle ages, Gaelic did not cease abruptly to have any connection with the Scottish monarch and state. Most of the mainland area of Scotland remained Gaelic-speaking and although by the time of Bannockburn, Fordoun, (writing between 1363 and 1383) might state: 'The Highlanders and people of the Islands are a savage and untamed nation ... hostile to the Anglic people and language', we must remember that at this time many 'Lowland' people were still Gaelic-speaking. Moreover, however hostile the Highlanders and Islanders might have been towards Scotland's 'Anglic' peoples, the

Lordship of the Isles entered into treaty relationships with the English crown, as witnessed by the later Treaty of Westminster-Ardtornish of 1462, in which a partition of the Scottish kingdom was agreed. As late as the reign of Alexander III, surviving manuscripts record and depict the traditional recitation of the royal pedigree by a Gaelic seanchaidh or professional historian on the occasion of the King's accession in 1249. The death of Alexander III in 1285/6 brings to an end the House of Canmore under which Gaelic customs – for example the accession ceremonies – had been perpetuated and amongst whom some official usage of Gaelic had been retained.

Yet essentially by this time the Kings of the Scots had become in language, culture and sympathy completely French. Walter of Coventry wrote in 1212: 'For the more recent kings of Scots profess themselves to be rather Frenchmen, both in race and manners, language and culture; and after reducing the Scots to utter servitude, they admit only Frenchmen to their friendship and service.'

With the royal and noble governing class French in speech, the rising burghal merchant class was preponderantly English. By the 13th century Gaelic had ceased to be a socially dominant language. Except in the Highlands and Hebrides, where it conserved and developed an integrated culture, Gaelic in central and southern Scotland was restricted to the common people although territorially the greater part of Scotland whether 'Highland' or 'Lowland' was Gaelic-speaking. The core society of early medieval Scotland was in fact trilingual; a situation rather like that in Java, Siam and Indo-China, where there are three

languages in use in different levels of society: royal, honorific and common. Or, like a trilingual society in Southern India, a symbiotic relationship of three occupational castes, speaking different languages. This interesting socio-linguistic situation has been stable for some time in India, Java and South-east Asia but it was superseded fairly rapidly in central Scotland at least, where English made headway in the manner already described.

However Gaelic was not altogether ignored by the royal houses which succeeded the House of Canmore. Robert Bruce having achieved the throne with 'Highland' assistance, inflicted one of the most decisive defeats an English army has ever received at Bannockburn, carrying as standard into the battle the Brecbennoch of St Columba, the most sacred relic of Gaelic Scotland. He then turned his attention to securing his own kingdom and extending his influence in Ireland. He called a Parliament at Ardchattan in Argyll and naturally enough its proceedings were in Gaelic. In Ireland Bruce urged the Irish to common cause with the Scots for, he said, that the two peoples shared a common origin, common customs and common language.

Scotland's last Gaelic-speaking monarch was James IV (1488- 1513) who cultivated Highland music and employed many highland servants and harpers. He travelled in the Highlands and had taken the trouble to learn the language of his northern subjects. (It is interesting that at the present time it is felt desirable that the heir to the throne, as Prince of Wales, should in like manner learn Welsh – a promise originally made by Edward I but never kept. With the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles and the assumption of the

title by the heir to the throne perhaps, the acquisition of the language of his future Highland subjects by the crown prince might restore fairplay all round.)

Within the Lordship of the Isles and within the great Gaelic houses of the Highlands an integrated Gaelic way of life continued throughout the middle ages. It is true that a common language and a common culture continued to be shared by Gaelic Scotland and Gaelic Ireland, and there was little to prevent the free coming and going of people across the narrow seas which joined rather than separated the Gaelic Lordship of the Isles with the then most Gaelic of all the five provinces of Ireland, Ulster. There were native learned orders of bardic poets, seanchaidhs or historians, clerics and ecclesiastics, latimers, judges, harpists and other musicians, harpists, scribes, physicians and the like. Their reputation might be as great in Ireland as it was in Scotland and they might have been almost as well travelled in the one country as the other. In one famous instance as Derick Thomson has shown, the MacMhuirich bardic family, records of a continuous tradition exist from the 13th century to circa 1800 – and longer if its Canadian branch is taken into account. There was in fact the one culture province of Gaeldom extending from Cork and Kerry to Cape Wrath and the Hebrides. Considerable divergence between local dialects in Ireland and Scotland had commenced quite early but until the 16th century the literary language of the high culture remained unified. Although many scholars refer to Old and Middle Irish, it would be more in keeping with the actual circumstances of the situation to call it Common Gaelic, following the modern Celtic scholar Kenneth Jackson.

Throughout Gaeldom there existed a common literary standard, mutually intelligible common speech, common oral traditions, dress, customs and life-style. Perhaps too much has been made of clan warfare, ignoring much of the internal strife which went on in England during the middle ages and later. Much of it was at the level of cattle raiding, a practice later celebrated in the 'wild west'. But despite such internal conflicts, integrative factors held Gaeldom together by a common culture and system of values. A chief might take his clan 'out' against a neighbour but the members of literary and learned orders could travel throughout Gaeldom unmolested and expect hospitality and a welcome at every great house they reached. Gaelic was the language of all levels of society. As a surviving land grant charter of the Lords of the Isles shows it was used alike for legal and official purposes. As an integral society Gaeldom was generally self-sufficient and, although its sphere of influence contracted towards the end of this period, it generally settled its own affairs and developed its own institutions in its own way – notably in the clan system: a novel and distinctive alternative to or variant upon the feudal system.

This independence was to be increasingly threatened by the growing power of the Scottish monarchy and state – especially after the Reformation. Nevertheless, before the loss of its effective independence Gaeldom demonstrated its capacity to innovate and to produce new culture. The clan system developed well beyond its parallels in Irish society. The hierarchical society of Gaelic Scotland was underpinned strongly by social bonds based upon kinship. The partriarchal chief was acknowledged as the blood relation to closer

or lesser degree of his dependent chieftains, tacksmen and clansfolk. Yet the principle of tanistry provided for the selection of a cousin or brother who might be the better fitted to succeed. Traditional justice was vested in the chiefs until 1747.

New literary and musical models and forms developed within the high culture – for example the art-form of piobaireachd developed at the end of this period and such was the level of its cultivation by the school or order maintained by the MacCrimmon family under the patronage of the MacLeods that the pipes rapidly superseded the harp as the pre-eminent musical instrument of Gaelic Scotland. The classical symphonic music of the piobaireachd became above all other forms the distinctive pinnacle of Gaelic musical culture.

Until the assertion of royal power following the Scottish Reformation, Gaelic speech within the Gaelic area was a sufficient medium for all social uses. That it could be acceptable indeed as a language of learned cultivation outside its own boundaries we can see from the rules of Aberdeen Grammar School in 1553. The scholars might converse in Latin, Greek, Hebrew or Gaelic but not in English. In the ensuing decades such attitudes towards Gaelic within the Lowlands were radically to change, and as the result of the subsequent penetration of Gaelic Scotland by Lowland influences, the function of Gaelic within the remaining Gaelic-speaking area was itself to change. Throughout almost all the Lowlands by the end of the middle ages English had become the common speech of all classes and no longer just the language of dominant social and occupational groups. From about 1520 onwards the common Lowland speech

came to be called 'Scots' and Gaelic identified as 'Irish'. Thus the Gaelic language and its speakers came to be regarded as in some way alien within their own nation. The traditional society of Gaelic Scotland was to be drawn into the same political and cultural sphere as Lowland Scotland after the Reformation had removed the one common cultural and symbolic institution shared by both: the Roman Catholic Church.

"MÌ-RÙN MÓR NAN GALL"

'Mhair i fòs
Is cha téid a glòir air chall
Dh'aindeoin gò
Is mi-rùn mhóir nan Gall.'
Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair:
AISÉIRIGH NA SEANN CHANAIN GAIDHLIG

'It continues yet
And its glory shall not be lost
Despite the vilification
And great ill-will of the Lowlanders.'
Alasdair MacDonald:
'RESURRECTION OF THE ANCIENT GAELIC LANGUAGE'

In these words, the 18th century bard Alasdair MacDonald, celebrated the ancient Gaelic language. The poet outlines the ways in which in history Gaelic had

been used in court and Parliament, by great and small, by Highlander and Lowlander. With the Lowlanders' loss of Gaelic, it became very clear to the Highlanders after 1560 just how great an ill-will could be generated against them. Indeed, a leading figure in the development of an 'anti-Gaelic ideology' was no less a figure than the King himself.

With the establishment of the Reformation, a number of shifts in relationship between Lowland and Highland Scotland came about. Since Highland areas despite Protestant inroads remained very largely Catholic after 1560, the language and life-style of Gaelic society were redefined as alien in references after this date. Gaelic, for example, ceases to be regarded or termed Scottish and is called Irish, Erse and the like, although it was in fact at this time that Gaelic was developing its distinctively Scottish forms characteristic of the Modern period. The terms 'Scottish' and 'Scots' came to be applied instead to Lowland speech and traditions. The Gaelic-speaking Scots of the Highlands and Islands could then be described as Irish and foreign or even as savage or barbarous. The writings of James VI show clearly the reformation of attitudes and the birth of a new ideology regarding Gaelic.

The equation was made of Gaelic with both barbarity and with 'popery'. The neutral tone of earlier documents relating to Gaelic had changed and was replaced by what amounted to 150 years of 'cold war' on the part of Lowland society against Gaelic society. Moreover, the categorisations of 'Highlander' and 'Lowlander' and inimical attitudes towards Gaelic and Gaelic culture are still present in Scottish popular opinion – and have even been accepted by the High-

landers themselves.

Scotland was one of the first European nations to pass legislation concerned with public education and the creation of a state educational system. The earliest Scottish education acts date back to 1494/96 and enjoined upon all lairds and chiefs the obligation of sending their children to learn Latin, 'art' and law in schools in the 'lowlands'. This meant that the formative years of the children of the leading citizens of Gaeldom were to be spent in an alien environment – a feature of Highland education which recurs throughout the educational history of Gaelic Scotland and remains alive to our own day.

In the post-reformation period, Gaelic was not perceived as constituting a language in its own right. The intention of the reformers was to put the vernacular scriptures into the hands of a literate nation, but Gaelic did not appear to them to be the means of accomplishing this. It seemed obvious to the reformers that a simultaneous shift could be made from Gaelic to English, from Catholicism to Calvinism, from barbarity to civility. Similar perceptions have been seen until recently in Australia where native languages were accorded no place in the educational schemes for aboriginal children. 'The native language is doomed anyway, why use it in education?' Other parallels exist with regard to Indian education in the U.S.A. Educational programmes have been criticised for failing to recognise and use the heritage of native lore and know-how which Indian children had brought with them to school. White teachers failed to perceive Indian culture as 'knowledge' and regarded the children as culturally 'empty', and their homeland as a 'wilderness'.

The Scottish Reformation brought into being changes in attitudes and relationships between Highland and Lowland Scotland. Politically the Reformation was accomplished by the supremacy of the pro-English party over the pro-French party and was ratified by the Treaty of Edinburgh 1560, Acts of the Scots Parliament in the same year and the drawing up of the 'First Book of Discipline' (1561) which outlined a constitution for the reformed church. This statement went much farther than ecclesiastical organisation for it contained an outline for a state education system encompassing parish elementary schools, town grammar schools and colleges, as well as bursaries to universities. A system of inspection at every level was added, and the finance was envisaged as forthcoming from sequestered church lands. The principles were further made explicit in the Assembly Act of 1562.

This was the intention of the reformers. It fell far short of realisation. So far as the universal provision of elementary schools was concerned, this ideal was not achieved until the nineteenth century. It was important for lowland society that schools should be provided throughout Scotland and notably in the Highland area. The inclusion of all ranks of society and the whole of the geographical area of Scotland into a unitary nation of common speech and values was important for the perpetuation of the new faith and order. The Act of 1494/6 was, however, a dead letter whether in Lowland or Highland Scotland. The Act of 1543 was, however, of more significance for the relations of Gaelic and Lowland Scotland. The Act gave authority for all citizens to possess the Scriptures 'baith in the new testament and the auld in the

Vulgar Toung Englis or Scottis'. This would seem to signify that in the then Catholic and non-Reformed Scottish State some measure of popular literacy existed – at least in English in Lowland Scotland – and that the admission of Gaelic as a national language enjoying any measure of recognition or equal validity with English Lowland speech was unrecognised or unrealised by Scotland's government.

The earliest education acts of the reformed Scots Parliament have a neutral attitude to Gaelic. The Act of 1567 ordained that all schools in town and country-side, all colleges and universities should be reformed (in religion) and likewise their masters. The Assembly Act of 1579 forebade studies abroad in Catholic countries and the Education Act of 1579 attempted to preserve 'song schools'. The 1582 Education Act ratified in similar terms its predecessor of 1567. That the presence of a non-reformed Catholic society of alien speech was seen as a menace to Lowland society and the Scottish state is clear from the terms and tones of the Education Acts of Scotland from the outset of the 17th century. However, in the latter part of the 16th century the attempts to destroy the integrity and autonomy of Gaelic society in Scotland were political, economic and military. In his *Basilikon Doron* of 1598(?) James VI observed of his Gaelic subjects: '*I shortly comprehend them all in two sorts of people: the one that dwelleth in our mainland that are barbarous for the most part, and yet mixed with some show of civility; the other that dwelleth in the Isles, and are utterly barbarians, without any sort of show of civility*'. The King's intention was to plant colonies among them of '*answerable inland subjects*' to '*reform and civilise*' them whilst '*rooting out and transporting the barbarous and stubborn sort*'. An Act of

1583 (The 'General Band') enjoined on the Highland chiefs the duty of giving sureties (i.e. hostages of their own kin) through landed men in the Lowlands for their good conduct. Further Acts of 1597 laid on the Highland chiefs a yearly rent to the Crown and the requirement of producing written title to their lands whilst a further act authorised the establishment of new burghs in the Highlands: in Kintyre, Lochaber and the Isle of Lewis.

The failure to establish burgh towns in the two latter districts may be linked with the failure of the 'Fife Adventurers' licensed by the Crown to settle and develop the Island of Lewis (1599-1610). It was intended that Harris, Northern Skye and Glenelg (which together with Lewis were forfeited MacLeod lands) were to have been settled also. The 1590s marked a period of repeated legislation and concern of the Privy Council for law and order in the Highlands and Islands. Incursions into the area to enforce the laws, collect rents and punish defection became increasingly severe and effective. The legitimisation of these activities was seen (at least by the king) in terms of '*planting the Gospell*' and '*Godis feare*' among the '*wild savages*' but also with the rider of '*ressaving the dew rentis addebtit to us*'. Shortly the continuing unreformed character of the Highlanders was to be identified as much with their Gaelic language as with their Catholic religion.

In Ireland and Scotland initially successful Gaelic revolts in 1595 led to renewed armed activities aimed at supplanting Gaelic power. In Ireland the Flight of the Earls, the collapse of Gaelic society, especially in Ulster, the most Gaelic of the provinces, and its subsequent plantation by Lowland Scots and English

protestant settlers effectively destroyed the contacts between Irish and Scottish Gaeldom. After the collapse of O'Dogherty's rebellion in 1608, Chichester, the leader of the King's forces in Ireland having enjoyed some measure of support from fencible troops from south-west Scotland offered his aid for a projected Scottish venture into the Western Isles on the grounds that these tasks 'were but two parts of one and the same work'. James, the first King of Scotland, England and Ireland, looked for the settlement of the borderlands between his three realms such that they might become the peaceful midland shires of one kingdom.

In 1609 were drawn up the 'Statutes of Iona'. Twelve Highland and Hebridean chiefs were enticed aboard a ship expecting to hear a sermon. The armed expedition to the Isles under Andrew, Lord Stewart of Ochiltree, and Andrew Knox, Bishop of the Isles, secured a written bond of these chiefs after they had undergone a period of imprisonment in the Lowlands. The agreement thus entered into under duress provided for the provision and support of protestant ministers to Highland parishes, the establishment of hostelries, the outlawing of beggars, the prohibition of traditional hospitality and strong drink, the education of chiefs' heirs in Lowland schools where they *'may be found able sufficiently to speik, reid and wryte Englische'*, limitation on the bearing and use of arms, the outlawry of bards and other bearers of the traditional culture and a prohibition on the protection of fugitives.

This enaction was the first of a succession of measures taken by the Scottish government specifically directed towards the extirpation of the Gaelic

language, the destruction of its traditional culture and the suppression of its bearers. Traditional forms of Gaelic learning were not recognised as knowledge by the authorities. Literacy in Gaelic did not count as literacy in the eyes of official policy. The language itself came to lack official status as civilised speech. (Such views were to persist even up to the present day in attitudes which admit or provide little place in the curriculum of Scottish or Highland schools for the teaching of the language or instruction in the history or culture of Gaelic Scotland.) The Statutes of Iona were ratified by an Act of the Privy Council of 1616 whose preface explicitly connects the lack of true religion, civility, godliness, knowledge and learning with the persistence of Gaelic speech and seeks to redress these deficiences with universal establishment of English as the common language and seeks to implement this by the establishment of schools:

'Forasmekle as the kingis Majestie haveing a speciall care and regaird that the trew religioun be advanceit and establisheit in all the pairtis of this kingdome, and that all his Majesties subjectis, especiallie the youth, be exercised and trayned up in civilitie, godliness, knowledge and learning, that the vulgar Inglishe toung be universallie plantit, and the Irishe language, which is one of the cheif and principall causis of the continewance of barbaritie and incivilitie amongis the inhabitantis of the Iles and Heylandis, may be abolisheit and removit; and quhairas thair is no means more powefull to further this his Majesties princelie regaird and porpois than the establisheing of schooles in the particular parrocheis of this kingdome whair the youthe may be taught at the least to write and reid, and be catechiesed and instructed in the groundis of religioun; thairfore the kingis Majestie, has thocht it necessary and expedient that in everie

parroche of this kingdome where convenient meanes may be had for interteyning a schoole, that a schoole sall be establisheit, and a fitt persone appointit to teache the same ...'

In these terms the Statutes of Iona were prefaced, legitimated and ratified by the Scottish Privy Council in its Education Act of 1616.

These measures may be viewed as an attempt to destroy the social customs of hospitality in the great houses of the Gaelic chiefs. The payments for the sustentation of travelling bards, musicians, historians and the other learned persons were made illegal. Such people, as well as many of the king's Gaelic-speaking subjects, might be regarded as either vagabonds or bards – in either case a category under prohibition – and thus summarily condemned to imprisonment, the stocks or transportation. Thus the Gaelic learned orders and the native high culture might be suppressed. As the links with Ireland were broken, Gaelic Scotland was thrown upon its own resources and then drawn into the cultural system of Lowland Scotland. The Highlands and Islands were thus rendered a cultural as well as a political dependency of Central (Lowland) Scotland. The establishment of the English language through the medium of a school system was seen as a principal means of achieving this social re-orientation. Such a policy was a recurrent theme of Scottish legislation in a series of education acts of the Scots Parliament and resolution of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for the next 150 years.

These resolutions were not implemented on any particularly general scale and the success of this policy was limited. No general parish school system was in practice achieved within the Highland area neither

was any general literacy or common use of English established within this period. In fact, between the Commonwealth period and the accession of William and Mary, Gaelic society enjoyed some respite and the anti-Gaelic education acts were for this time repealed and suspended. However, the effective social separation of Scottish from Irish Gaeldom and the enforcement of the Statutes of Iona broke down the Gaelic learned orders and initiated the anglicisation of the chiefs. With the replacement of traditional economic links of the Highland area overseas by links through the Lowlands, Gaelic Scotland was effectively being drawn into the political system of the Scottish State.

At this point in the linguistic history of Scotland an interesting social process is at work: the legitimisation of the suppression of the original speech and continuing original culture of the Scottish nation by a religious party which had come into political power. In the 16th century literary references to Gaelic readily acknowledge it to be the Scottish language and the speech of Lowland Scotland within recent historical times. The Anglian speech of the Lowlands was referred to as *'Inglis'* (English). The remoteness of the Highland area from the Central Lowlands and its separate culture rendered the spread of new ideas and new values such as Calvinism slow and uncertain. The neutral tone in earlier 16th century documents relating to Gaelic underwent a change. This would have been difficult to accomplish had Gaelic been equated (as until recently it had been) with Scottish in the popular mind. Gaelic thus ceased to have an obvious relationship with Scottish nationality. The resulting animosities can still be recognised at the

present time and identified by Gaels as *'mì-rùn mór nan Gall'* (the great ill-will of the Lowlanders).

The failure of the efforts of the Lowlanders to achieve their ends by legislation, armed incursion and economic penetration of the Highlands during the 17th century resulted in some revision of attitudes to Gaelic. By the end of the century there was a willingness in official quarters to use the language as a missionising medium.

During the 17th century a series of enactions had attempted to eradicate Gaelic and replace it by English. The Statutes of Iona were confirmed by the Scottish Parliament in 1631. In 1633 Parliament passed a *'Ratification of the Act of Counsall Anent Plantatioun of Schooles'* to apparently little effect.

In 1646 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed a resolution to enforce the Statutes of Iona and to set up English schools in each Highland parish. An Act to these effects was passed in Parliament in the same year. In 1662 the Act was repealed by the Restoration Parliament but after the Revolution of 1688 rents from the bishoprics of Argyll and Dunkeld were utilised for the *'erecting of English Schools for rooting out the Irish language and other pious uses'*. Acts of 1690 and 1693 were intended to provide teachers of proved political and religious loyalty and in 1696 the matter of the Act of 1646 was yet again restored to the Statute Book as the 'Act of Settling Schools'.

This last Act, however, specifically placed upon Kirk sessions in the parishes the clear duty of organisation and provided the necessary financial arrangements and by 1698 for example, some 43 schools were established in Argyll and the Isles. After 1690

the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland became especially conscious of the need to provide Gaelic-speaking Presbyterian clergy in the Highlands, (by Acts of the Assembly of 1701, 1710, 1714 and 1717). Acts of the Assembly in 1699 *'Anent Planting of the Highlands'* go into great detail in ensuring a supply of Gaelic-speaking clergy and church officials and 'Irish' Bibles and catechisms. That some change in attitudes to Gaelic were occurring may be read into the clause authorising a revision of the Irish Bible into the 'Highland Language'. Yet the sole language of instruction in the Highland Schools was English and in general was to remain so throughout the coming century.

A century of legislation proved ineffectual in supplanting Gaelic in the Highlands. Yet during this period the social organisations of the Gaelic cultural system underwent profound changes. The economic bases of support for the bardic schools had been removed and this species of literary and musical institution collapsed. Musicians and poets continued to be retained as individual professionals in the retinues of chiefs but the 17th century is the last in which there are notices of Scottish musicians and literati visiting Ireland and vice-versa. The compositions and culture continued to be transmitted, notably through the family, but the learned orders had lost their status and prestige. The compositions and traditions of the high culture were passed on to tradition-bearers lower in the social scale and the medieval high culture of Gaelic Scotland became transmuted into a folk-art. In some respects this resulted in a freer and livelier literary form taken by popular poets such as Iain Lom, Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, Iain MacCo-

drum, Donnchadh Bàn Mac-an-t-Saoir, Rob Donn MacAoidh, Màiri nighean Alasdair Ruaidh in the 17th and 18th centuries. Thus a new form of literary art displaced the old: the composition by popular poets of sophisticated oral production, not in response to professional patronage or for payment but for personal satisfaction and the entertainment of a peasant-type community of which the poet was part (whether lettered, learned or neither). Naturally themes and verse forms showed development beyond the stereotyped classic production of the bardic schools.

THE BREAKING OF GAELIC SOCIETY

During the 18th century a society entitled the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (S.S.P.C.K.), founded in 1701, became the chief agency for the establishment of schools in the Gaelic area and the promotion of English. In practice 'Christian knowledge' was, in the curriculum, equated with the English language, the Presbyterian religion, church music and arithmetic, those being the sole subjects of instruction. Finance was attracted from private subscribers, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, church collections in the Lowlands, the State and the King. Attendance was voluntary but coercion and economic enducements were from time to time reported.

Notwithstanding the pains taken by the Church of Scotland to ensure a supply of Gaelic-speaking ministers to Gaelic charges, it is remarkable to encounter references to prohibitions on the use of Gaelic as a

medium of instruction in S.S.P.C.K. minutes. Despite the provision of the catechism and Metrical Psalms in Gaelic it is incongruous to encounter instances of S.S.P.C.K. schoolmasters being reprimanded for teaching children to read these books in their schools and being forbidden to teach children to read the Irish Bible (a Scottish Gaelic version was not then available). Only the English Bible might be used together with other English devotional works taught mechanically. Not surprisingly, literacy in English made little headway. It is known, however, that Catholic 'hedge-schools' existed during this period. The activities of Irish and Scottish Gaelic Catholic priests is attested during this period and it is surmised that their medium of teaching was Gaelic. One can hardly imagine their mission being conducted in English – a language utterly unknown to their hearers (yet this was in fact the situation in the S.S.P.C.K. schools).

A change in attitude to Gaelic in this educational work was not possible until after the collapse of political Jacobitism in 1746 and the assurance of success in pacifying the Highlands in the ensuing two decades. Dr Samuel Johnson was instrumental in bringing before the general public the fact that the S.S.P.C.K. was actively preventing a translation of the Bible into Scottish Gaelic from being published. Johnson attacked the policy of the S.S.P.C.K. towards the Highlanders in these terms:

' ... there remains only their language and their poverty. Their language is attacked on every side. Schools are erected in which English only is taught and there were lately some who thought it reasonable to refuse them a version of the Holy Scriptures, that

they might have no monument of their mother tongue.'

Boswell stated that he believed this letter of 1766 to be the finest work from Johnson's pen.

It is difficult to understand why Johnson is popularly believed to have been anti-Scottish and anti-Gaelic. It is true he once declared, erroneously, that no book had ever been written in Gaelic; but he also championed the production of literature in Gaelic and advocated the establishment of a Gaelic press in Skye.

The Gaelic New Testament of the S.S.P.C.K. appeared the following year in 1767 and the Old Testament was to follow in 1801. The S.S.P.C.K. schools from 1767 admitted Gaelic as the medium of instruction in their Highland schools (although parish schools continued to use English only).

A confrontation of two disparate societies was now taking place: each had its own distinctive cultural patterns, social structures, religious institutions and life-style which can be illustrated in the 'culture-clash' of their two languages. Lowland Scotland made plain its anxiety concerning the unreformed society in the north in terms of unease concerning its language, which was identified as the chief cause of barbarity, ignorance and popery. Gaelic society was reluctant to become absorbed within a society whose speech and institutions were alien, notwithstanding the consciousness amongst Gaelic tradition-bearers that theirs was the original and continuing 'Scottish' language and culture and that the incorporation of the Highlands into the Scottish state was being undertaken in the name of loyalty and obedience to the Scottish crown.

It is thus not surprising that the Jacobite Revolts in 1715 and, more particularly, of 1745, were readily supported by the majority of the Gaelic chiefs and their clansmen. Even in the case of clans like the MacLeods whose chiefs did not respond, large numbers of their clansfolk did. Resentment over the growing cultural interpenetration of the Highlands by institutions mediated through English, sporadic coercion to support governmental requirements and the new English schools and similar social tensions could, after the Union of 1707 with England and the accession of a non-Scottish dynasty to the British throne in 1714, enable Gaeldom to voice its sense of oppression against an entirely non-Scottish partner in the Union which had achieved conspicuous dominance, and against a German monarch with the passing of the Stuarts.

Culture-conflict was apparent in the imposition on the Gaelic Highlands of English language schools and the interference by agencies of the State in the cultural system of Gaeldom (the suppression of bardic schools and the withholding of scriptures in Gaelic, for example). Conflict in the form of armed risings resulted. The failure of Gaelic Scotland to maintain its political and military autonomy led to the 'pacification' of the Highlands by the Duke of Cumberland and to the Disarming Acts. These removed from the Highlanders not only their traditional social leaders and their weapons, but also made illegal the visible aspects of their material culture: their Highland Dress and their musical instruments, the pipes. After 1746 the social structure of the clan system was broken and a landlord and tenant relationship substituted. The remaining integrative aspects of Gaelic

culture were removed: dress, music and the means of defence, with the exception only of the language itself and the popular oral folk-poets. The Jacobite chiefs were executed, punished and their lands forfeited. The surviving chiefs were forced by economic means into the position of landlords having contractual relations with their tenantry in the place of clan chiefs having familial relationships with their extended kin.

Hence a society based upon family, kin, clan was reformulated into one based upon a money economy. This was of increasing significance in a modern unified state well advanced into an industrial society, in which the industrial and agrarian revolutions were well under way. The Highlands were opened up for commercial exploitation and the institution of a greater division of labour in society. After 1746, greater economic activity in such enterprises as commercial forestry, extensive sheep farming, charcoal burning, civil engineering, iron-smelting and kelp-burning intensified economic life and brought greater interpenetration of the area by English speakers. Henceforward more activities and social situations in the Highlands were to become communicated through the English language. Economic innovation seems always to have been associated with intrusive use of English speech in Scotland.

The alienation of the Gaels from their traditional social leaders was in course of being accomplished as a language gap was being opened up between them. The process of alienation of the Gaels from the core society of modern Scotland was well under way. The alienation of the Gaels from their traditional culture had been attempted and a folk culture had arisen to replace it.

By the last few decades of the 18th century, Gaelic Scotland had been incorporated politically and economically into the United Kingdom. Though complete assimilation of Gaeldom socially and culturally had not yet been entirely accomplished, the traditional social structure was in decay, and intrusion of new economic institutions threatened the cohesion of the symbolic and value systems of Gaelic society.

The processes were essentially one-way: linguistic influence proceeded from English to Gaelic. Modification of Gaelic by English gathered momentum. English-Gaelic expressions increased in Gaelic speech. Highlanders most closely in contact with anglicising influences had of necessity to learn the incoming language and their original speech became redundant in economic and social life. Absorption proceeded as the Gaels adopted new institutions (e.g. a money economy) which are brought with the new language. New life-styles and customs are adopted and with them the associated new English forms of speech.

NEW RÔLES, NEW SETBACKS

This period – from the introduction of the Gaelic scriptures in 1767 to the Education (Scotland) Act of 1972 – is marked by the use of Gaelic as a means of acculturating the Highland people into the mainstream of British society. The S.S.P.C.K. brought out its Gaelic New Testament in 1767 and admitted Gaelic into its schools as a medium of education, notably insofar as religious instruction was concerned. The appearance of the scriptures in a vernacular Scottish Gaelic translation for the first time was the beginning of a religious literature in Gaelic. It is notable that the agencies of publication (chiefly the S.S.P.C.K.) saw fit to provide translations only of orthodox works which had been proven sound over the passage of time.

Hence this religious literature was made up of the most conservative of Puritan and Calvinist homiletics

of the previous century. These 'new' religious writings for the literate Gaels provided them with a fundamentalist predestinarian theology which remains active in the north-west and the northern Hebrides to the present day. Such a philosophy could be called upon by ministers of the Church of Scotland to justify the economic and social adversities brought upon the Highland people during this period as the wrath of God for their sins.

The period was also one of great economic difficulty in the Highlands. The traditional economy had been based upon subsistence agriculture and the pasturing of cattle. Surplus cattle were driven to the Lowlands and exchanged for money. Sheep were also common and pastured in equal ratio to cattle. By the later 18th century a money economy was being introducted into the Highlands: rents were sought in cash rather than kind. Some emigration was under way and had gained momentum as the result of increases in rents and the depersonalisation of relationships between chief or landlord and clanfolk or tenants. The intermediary class of 'tacksmen' *(fir-tac)* were being rendered redundant and there are instances of migrations of tacksmen who, as community leaders, took with them their dependent subtenants to lands of opportunity overseas.

The crucial factor which upset the balance of the Highland economy both in social and economic terms was the introduction of 'improved' varieties of sheep. The initial introduction of 'great sheep' which was to replace the small native multi-horned sheep was first undertaken in 1762 by Sir John Lockhart-Ross of Balnagowan in Easter Ross. The black-faced Lintons were the precursors of the more familiar Cheviot

breed which by 1790 had reached the far north and whose husbandry was actively promoted by Sir John Sinclair of Ulster in Caithness. From 1790 sheep farming gained such momentum in the Highlands that the landowners with the prospect of good profits were enthusiastic in clearing from their lands the native Highland people and their settlements to enable clear leases to be made available to Lowland graziers.

The notorious Highland Clearances were undertaken in the face of popular resistance, frequently when the male population had been recruited to serve abroad in the armed forces, and, not surprisingly, often with violence and force. Such incidents commenced in Strath Rusdale, Ross-shire in 1792 and continued into the 1850s. Summary evictions avoiding the worse excesses of public violence were to continue until the passing of the Crofters Acts in 1886 and 1892.

As the result of the Clearances, whole areas were cleared of human beings and their native breeds of cattle and sheep. Ratios of twenty sheep to one of cattle were to ruin the pastoral viability of the land and to reduce wide areas to bracken, deer and grouse moor by the 20th century. It was in effect a human and an ecological disaster. Throughout the interior of the Gaelic mainland of the Highlands the first half of the 19th century witnessed the forced migration of virtually its entire population. In terms of the Gaelic speech community this could be regarded as the removal of its heartland. Effectively this was to reorientate the linguistic geography of Scotland in reducing the Gaelic areas to the very fringes of northern and western coastal areas and to the Hebrides.

During this period, the official use of Gaelic may be regarded as a means of accustoming the Highland people to an English-oriented way of life and of gaining their acquiescence in the adversities which were overcoming them and their way of life.

As has been noted, the S.S.P.C.K. schools after 1767 used Gaelic as a medium of instruction. Similarly, the schools set up by the commission administering forfeited Highland estates after 1746 followed the pattern of the S.S.P.C.K. schools. By the beginning of the 19th century it has been estimated that of a Highland population of some 335,000 about 300,000 understood Gaelic only. In 1824 the S.S.P.C.K. proposed that Gaelic-speaking children in its schools were first to read Gaelic before commencing with English. In 1828 Gaelic text books were introduced with assistance from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The success in the promotion of schools within the Highland area during this period may be gauged by the fact that in 1811 the S.S.P.C.K. maintained 290 schools educating 16,000 children throughout the Highlands and Islands. These schools, however, had not achieved any conspicuous success in promoting any general literacy or knowledge of English.

By the first quarter of the 19th century, migration of Gaels to the cities had resulted in colonies of urban Gaels now well accustomed to an urban way of life conducted through the medium of English and with sufficient means to promote charitable efforts in their former homelands. In 1811 was founded the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools, and in 1812 and 1818 similar societies in Glasgow and Inverness. The policy of these societies was to teach

initially solely through the medium of Gaelic with the first emphasis laid upon ensuring literacy in the Gaelic scriptures. In the case of Glasgow and Inverness Society schools, reading and writing in English was subsequently introduced through the medium of Gaelic. The schools were often temporary and their school masters travelled from village to village. Typically they taught all ages in shifts on weekdays, evenings and Sundays. The schools earned the popular epithet *Sgoilean Chriosd* (Schools of Christ) and it is estimated that by 1861 the Edinburgh Society alone had taught 100,000 persons to read and distributed some 200,000 Gaelic Bibles. Similar methods were used by *Comunn nam Ban* (The Free Church Ladies' Highland Association) set up following the disruption of 1843 and the secession of the Free Church from the Church of Scotland.

Further measures of the spread of popular Gaelic education in this period may be judged in the Inverness Society's report in 1826 of its 1822 survey. Some 495 schools had been established by then in the Highland area: 171 by the parishes of the Church of Scotland; 134 by the S.S.P.C.K.; 77 by the Edinburgh Society; 48 by the Glasgow Society; and 65 by the Inverness Society. The popular nature of this provision may be further judged in their attendance by Protestants and Catholics. Schools for Gaelic-speaking children were provided in Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee and other urban centres. Schools of the S.S.P.C.K. had been established in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, Perth and even London and other English cities. The extent to which Gaelic may have been used in these schools is not clear.

The Gaelic Society of London, established in 1777

to secure the repeal of the Disarming Acts which forbade use of the Highland dress, tartan and bagpipes after 1746, was successful in its objectives by the repeal measures of 1782 and 1784 which restored to lawful use these elements of Gaelic material and symbolic culture. This, the earliest Gaelic Society to be established, has continued in existence to the present day; in its early period it was active in charitable support of the Gaelic schools and in the relief of destitution in the Highland area. Famine conditions resulting from crop failures in 1835/36 and 1846/47 facilitated the evacuation of the mainland area.

The Gaelic Society of London also provided a translation service for the Government, putting into Gaelic the text of proclamations, Acts of Parliament and other notices for distribution and display in the Highland area. Thus Gaelic was in use for official purposes during this period and enjoyed some measure of governmental recognition. The original members of the Gaelic Society of London were probably in trade or the professions. The 1770s were a decade of very substantial emigration from the Highlands and Hebrides.

In the church, a strong Gaelic Protestant tradition had been founded. Through the diffusion of the scriptures in Gaelic, the utilisation of the Metrical Psalms in Gaelic and the widespread appointment of college-educated Gaelic-speaking ministers to Highland charges, a high standard of Gaelic preaching was promoted. Gaelic congregations developed a distinctive style of psalmody in which the metrical Psalms came to be sung to long tunes given out by the precentor and antiphonally answered with extemporised decoration by the congregation. Each of these aspects

of Protestant church tradition continues to have a place of special regard with Gaelic congregations to the present day and they have been identified as the means whereby Gaelic has continued to have significance as a social institution.

It is clear, though, that the established church, the presbyterian Church of Scotland, was in this period a particularly useful agency of political and social control to the government and the landowning classes. A fatalistic, predestinarian theology was preached from pulpits at the time of harassments and evictions. Acquiescence towards the will of God as identified with the clearance policy of the landlord was frequently enjoined and acceptance of punishment for sins and waywardness was propounded. For many social activities a testimony of good behaviour from the parish minister might be required.

Effective resistance to eviction might be controlled by the withholding of such a certificate, which, amongst other things, would prevent a ceremony of marriage taking place or a tenancy being granted. That there was some acceptance of this designation of wickedness on the part of the evicted Highland people can be seen for instance in the graffiti on the church windows at Croick where evicted people from Glencalvie, Ross-shire, sheltered in 1845. Such acceptances of fate and adversity are also apparent in the doctrines and religious thought of Gaelic communities up to the present time.

However, in 1843 occurred an event in Scotland's ecclesiastical history known as the Disruption. It was a secession away from the Church of Scotland on the part of many of its Highland congregations and ministers. Although explained and justified by the secessionists in doctrinal and religious terms such explanations were clearly underpinned by a profound unease with the use made by the authorities of the established church to sanction the clearances which by the 1840s had reached their climax. The landowners were unfavourably disposed in many instances to this newly formed 'Free Church'. Often feus were unobtainable for the land on which to erect a church. Instances occur in which ships were used as places of worship as a result. The Free Church, however, despite persecution, emerged as the popular church of the Gaelic peasantry in the northwest. By 1851 it had established the remarkable total of 712 schools in Scotland as a whole. Its language was that of its people. Its strength lay in the Gaelic areas and these facts remain so to the present day. The Free Church – and a further secession, the Free Presbyterian Church – are the principal churches of the remaining Gaelic-speaking areas of the northwest and northern Hebrides.

In this period Gaelic became the language of a popular church. It was also the medium of a popular educational movement which created a popular literacy within the Highlands and Hebrides. At the same time, large numbers of its speakers were being removed from the interior of the Gaelic-speaking area. Some removed and settled on the coasts but much larger numbers emigrated to the cities in the south or emigrated overseas. Some measure of the success of the Gaelic schools in the promotion of Gaelic literacy can be gauged from statistics of publications in the 19th century. New titles of Gaelic books from the commercial press have been counted as follows:-

	Titles
1830-1840	106
1840-1850	164
1850-1860	115
1860-1870	142
1870-1880	169
1880-1890	98
1890-1900	111

Gaelic publishing houses were established and flourished (Norman MacLeod of Edinburgh, Aeneas MacKay of Stirling, Archibald Sinclair and Alexander MacLaren of Glasgow). Also, by the end of the 19th century, Gaelic weekly newspapers were published. *An Gaidheal* (The Gael) in Paisley, and *MacTalla* (The Echo) in Nova Scotia, 1892-1904, (but circulating in Scotland and other Gaelic-speaking centres abroad).

The period was one in which extension of the social uses of Gaelic was conspicuous. Gaelic became the language of the pulpit and religious literature, the medium of popular education, a secular Press and of popular journalism. An important development of folk literature occurred in which popular songs in Gaelic were produced and circulated both within the Highlands and on the concert platforms of societies of Gaelic exiles in Glasgow and other cities. These developments might have continued – as they seem to have done in Wales so far as the Welsh language is concerned – into the twentieth century, assuring for Gaelic a significant role as a national language, a language of a vigorous albeit minority folk life and of a popular literature. Two chief factors which prevented this may be identified in the Clearances and the taking over by a national system of education of the Gaelic schools movement after 1872.

New roles for Gaelic in this period resulted in its use as a medium through which the components of a national culture were being communicated to the Highlanders. The Church in its Gaelic message was accustoming the Gael to the economic necessities of migration or of acceptance of a new social and economic order in his homeland.

Printed literature was familiarising the Highlanders with the ideas and life-styles of an industrial and urban society whose values and culture were in marked contrast to those conveyed by the traditional Gaelic culture then fully extant and popularly enjoyed: Ossianic ballads, sagas, folk tales and chants from the heroic age, work songs and narratives from the medieval period, as well as the productions of the post- medieval popular poets. These poets had been influenced by external literary ideas and models but had generated their work within a pastoral society which by the 19th century, was largely broken up in Gaelic Scotland. S.S.P.C.K. schools had, in some instances, taught industrial processes and technical subjects to the young Gael – presumably as useful knowledge for the industrialisation of his society or as a useful pre-requisite to migration.

Emigration became a persistent feature of Gaelic social conditions. Gaelic colonies in the Carolinas, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, Glengarry (Ontario) and Prince Edward Island received substantial numbers of Gaels throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 20th century, particularly through the merchant navy, large numbers have gone over to the ports of the Commonwealth and Empire as well as to such centres as Boston and Detroit. A hauntingly beautiful popular song which recalls this period of

the Gaelic story remains popular today:-

'Gu ma slàn do na fearaibh
Chaidh thairis an cuan,
Gu talamh a' gheallaidh
Far nach fairich iad fuachd,

'Health to the men
Who went over the sea,
To the land of promise
Where they will no feel the cold,

'Sinn a' fàgail na tir' seo
Oir cha chinnich ann ni dhuinn:
Tha'm bùntàta air dol dhìth oirnn
Is cha chinn iad le fuachd.

'We are leaving this country
For nothing will grow for us:
Potatoes have become scare for us
And they will not grow for cold.

'Sinn a' fàgail an àit' seo
Bho'n a chuir iad mór mhàl oirnn:
'Nuair a thig an Fhéill Mhàrtainn
Cha bhi nàir air ar gruaidh.

'We are leaving this place
Since they put up the rent to us:
When Martinmas comes
There'll be no shame on our cheek.

'Gheibh sinn crodh ann is caoraich,
Gheibh sinn cruithneachd air raoin ann,
'S cha bhi'm fearann cho daor dhuinn
'S tha fraoch an taoibh tuath.

'We'll get cattle and sheep there,
We'll get wheat on the fields there,
And land will not be as dear for us
As heather in the north

'Gu ma slàn do na fearaibh,
Chaidh thairis an cuan.'

'Health to the men
Who went over the sea.'

But the song does not tell us just how they fared in the Nova Scotian winter. The first Highland emigrants who sailed in the *'Hector'* to Pictou County in 1773 would have perished in their first winter's snow but for the help of the local Mic Mac Indians. The Tiree bard John MacLean later graphically described in *'A Choille Ghruamach'* ('The Gloomy Forest) the privations of wresting a living in the harsh climate and infertile clearings of the Nova Scotian forests.

Gu bheil mi am ònrach 's a' choille ghruamach,
Mo smaointinn luaineach, cha tog mi fonn:
Fhuair mi an t-àit seo an aghaidh nàduir,
Gun thréig gach talanta bha 'nam cheann...

I'm all alone in this gloomy woodland,
My mind is troubled, I sing no song;
Against all nature I took my place here
And native wit from my mind has gone...

Is i seo an dùthaich 's a bheil an cruadal
Gun fhios do'n t-sluagh a tha tighinnn a nall;
Gur h-olc a fhuaras oirnn luchd a' bhuaraidh
A rinn le an tuairisgeul ar toirt ann...

This is a country that's hard and cruel,
They do not know it who journey still;
Evil the yarns of the smooth-tongued coaxers
Who brought us hither against our will...

An uair thig an geamhradh is ám na Dùbhlachd
Bidh sneachd a' dlùthadh ri cùl nan geug,
Is gu domhain dùmhail dol thar na glùine,
Is e gu maith triùbhsair cha dèan i feum,

Gun stocainn dhùbailt 's a' mhocais chlùdaich
Bhios air a dùnadh gu dlùth le éill:
B'e am fasan ùr dhuinn a cosg le fionntach
Mar chaidh a rùsgadh de'n bhrùid an dé...

When comes the winter, and cold December
The forest branches are clothed in snow,
No good trousers are defence against it,
Thigh-deep and thick on the ground below,
But clouted mocassins and doubled stockings
And leather thongs are our forest boots:
Rawhide and fur are our latest fashion
Lately ripped from the forest brutes...

An uair thig an samhradh 's am miosa Céitein
Bidh teas na gréine ' gam fhàgail fann:
Gun cuir i spéirid ' s a h-uile creutair
A bhois fo éislean air feadh nan toll...

The month of May and the first of summer,
My strength is drained by the blazing sun
That wakes from winter the forst creatures
Where they lay weakly in den and run...

Chan fhaigh mi àireamh dhuibh ann an dànachd
Gach beathach gràineil a thogas ceann;
Is cho liutha plàigh ann 's a bha air Righ Phàro
Air son nan tràillean 'nuair bhàth e an camp...

I have not space to relate the boldness
Of each foul crawler that seeks its prey;
Like to the plagues that Pharaoh suffered
My mean condition from day to day...

Iain Mac Ghille-Ethain: AM BARD AN CANADA
Translation by William Neil (adapted).

THE TEACHING-OUT OF GAELIC

From the end of the 19th century, the survival of Gaelic faced its most crucial challenge: the use of the schools to rid society of what was termed by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, 'the Gaelic nuisance'. The pressure remained on until after the middle of the present century.

The Education Act (Scotland) 1872 was passed without recognition that the Highlands were an area of particular linguistic significance within a national educational system. No specific references to Gaelic were contained in the Act. The Act set up School Boards in each parish and burgh and to these authorities were transferred all schools set up by parliamentary authority (e.g. the 'Parliamentary' schools set up under an Act of 1838). The boards could purchase private adventure schools, but in the case of Charitable Schools they could only accept and not

purchase. The boards thus took over the schools established by the S.S.P.C.K., the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church and the Gaelic Schools Societies. Indeed, these latter had declined in significance since 1841 as charitable moneys had been more readily forthcoming for destitution and famine relief than for education (for which cause the churches were the more successful).

The passing of the 1872 Education Act marks an important turning point for the recognition and use of Gaelic within the education system. Under the new regime, the use of Gaelic was actively discouraged in the schools. The appointment of English-speaking or English teachers was common – as was the punishment of children for speaking Gaelic in schools. The device of the *maide-crochaidh*, a stick on a cord, was commonly used to stigmatise and physically to punish children speaking Gaelic in the schools. Its use is reported as late as the 1930s in Lewis.

Why there should be so sudden a change of policy concerning the use of Gaelic in schools is difficult to appreciate. The agencies promoting public education in the Highlands up to 1872 had been sympathetic to Gaelic and active in its use as a teaching medium. These agencies had readily handed over their educational work to the newly constituted State system. In hindsight, it appears remarkable that they should have done so since, in these respects, the new system proved inimical to the methods and objectives of the schools societies operating within the Gaelic area. Answers may be found in the attitude towards Gaelic of the Scotch Education Department (and its predecessor the Board of Education up until 1878), and the School Boards themselves. These latter were open to

influence of the landed classes which by this time were English, English-speaking or of Lowland origin – in any case overwhelmingly anglicised.

The last three decades of the 19th century were not a period in which the Gaels supinely accepted the adversities of their position in British society. Resistance to eviction, agitation in the Press and the formation of associations to promote the welfare of the Highland people are to be noted. As far as the language is concerned, in 1871 was established the Gaelic Society of Inverness which was active in the agitation for the restoration and advancement of Gaelic within Highland schools and established contacts with M.P's and H.M.I's to this end. *An Comunn Gaidhealach* (The Highland Association) was founded in 1891, which rapidly came to lead the language-loyalty movement, although it operated chiefly within a Lowland context. Nevertheless, its annual musical and literary festivals (National and Provincial Mds) became important foci of Gaelic cultural activity. As an educational pressure group and a publishing agency *An Comunn* was also considerably more effective than other Gaelic societies of the time.

As the result of pressures from the Gaelic Society of Inverness, the Scotch Education Department circulated 102 Highland School Boards in 1876 on the language question. Ninety replied and of these sixty-five were in favour of Gaelic teaching and twenty-five against. Fifty-three boards stated they were able to provide Gaelic teachers. Two years later, as the result of a petition organised by the Gaelic Society of Inverness, some permissive provisions favourable to the inclusion of Gaelic were admitted to the Schools Code. But by 1881 no real implementation of these

provisions had occurred.

In 1897 the Educational Institute of Scotland gave explicit and strong support to the admission of Gaelic into Highland schools and the Report on the condition of the crofters (The Napier Commission) in 1885 was particularly emphatic in its view of the place of Gaelic in the schools. Inspection through the medium of Gaelic should be enjoined, not merely permitted and knowledge of Gaelic made the primary qualification for every person concerned in public education in Gaelic areas. Despite such authoritative advocacy, Gaelic received no recognition in the Acts of 1892, 1901 and 1908 or in the draft bill of 1918. Only following particular agitation, led by *An Comunn Gaidhealach*, was a mandatory Gaelic clause included in the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act. Even so, the vagueness and brevity of the clause were clearly the chief reasons for its having little effect in promoting Gaelic as a teaching medium in Highland schools.

During this period the role of Gaelic as a teaching medium seems to have been ignored despite the successes which popular education through this medium had already scored. Murdo Macleod, then a Schools Gaelic Supervisor, writing in 1963, observed that notwithstanding the 1918 Gaelic clauses:

'The general pattern in the education of Gaelic-speaking children continued to be one of using Gaelic only when necessity dictated its use. As soon as the Gaelic-speaking pupil had acquired a modest acquaintance with English, Gaelic was almost completely discarded until its study was taken up in a desultory manner in the upper primary classes.'

Scottish public education gave little recognition to

Gaelic language, culture or history – even in the Highlands themselves. The attitude of the central Scottish education authority was one which contained the unspoken assumption that Gaelic was to be replaced as the language of the Highlander. The operation of the explicit policies and assumptions of the writings of James VI and the 17th century educational enactments is clearly a continuing historic tradition – reinforced if anything by the events of the 18th century, and owing a great deal to the ideology of the Whig historians. A similar situation is reported in contemporary Aborigine education schemes in Australia:

'The process of assimilation in Australia is obviously going to mean the extinction of the Australian languages through a guided education which has among its aims the complete transculturation of the native speaker. If he is to take a full part in White Australian life, his own language is more of an obstacle than an advantage ... It will, no doubt, be several generations before the languages disappear ... but they certainly have no future. It is this aspect which has made the Australian government refuse to use the native languages as temporary vehicles of primary education ...' (A. Capell: *'Studies in Sociolinguistics'* Mouton 1966)

This seems to have been the case vis-à-vis Gaelic in Scottish education from 1872 at least up until 1918.

The situation quoted by Capell may be contrasted with other types of cross-cultural education ideologies and practices. On the one hand there is a suppressive-alienative model as in the present case; and on the other more liberal models, one of which may be illustrated by the Soviet 'planned culture-contact' schemes

in Central Asia, in which vernaculars are cultivated and developed as educational and literary media albeit by an external authority with the aim of encouraging thought and speechways favourable to its regime and which are intended to be ultimately conducive to the acceptance of Soviet culture and the assimilation of the local language. Another typification may be found in the Irish and Welsh systems at the present time where native languages are cultivated and developed as educational and literary media with a view to the replacement of an intrusive language of social dominance. The indifferent results of official policy favouring Irish since independence may be contrasted with the more popular and lively developments centring on Welsh from 1956 – especially since the implementation of the language policies of the Gittins Report.

The Act of 1878 amongst other things attempted to provide for a post-elementary continuation of public education. In the Highlands its effects were delayed owing to the poverty of the microscopic education authorities which reached a financial crisis in the 1880s. By the end of the century a system of Higher Grade and Secondary Schools had come into existence in some of the Highland authorities and a Leaving Certificate Scheme had been introduced in 1888. Examination in Gaelic was not instituted until 1915. Standards were so high that non-Gaelic speakers were deterred from attempting the Gaelic course.

As the road to the professions and to University lay solely through the secondary school this means of social mobility for brighter Gaelic children was more tortuous than for their urban English-speaking con-

temporaries. Most Gaelic children had at that time to leave home at twelve (or at latest fourteen) and board at a secondary school remote from their homes; a practice that persisted until very recently. Such schools were located in the more anglicised areas. The administrative and teaching media of the school would be English. In terms of language and culture, so too would be the surrounding community. For brighter children then, a process was started at an early age which alienated them from their language and culture. They were then brought to accept an additional move away to college or university even more remote from their home background if they sought professional status.

Gaelic children were perceived as 'disadvantaged' and regarded as 'deficit-systems', in much the same way only perhaps more acutely as slum children 'of poor speech'. No particular benefit was seen in the possession of two languages. Even insofar as Gaelic became a certificate subject after 1915, it did not rank as a 'foreign' or a 'modern' language from the point of Civil Service or professional body entrance requirements, until the 1960s.

Little advantage seems to have been taken of Gaelic children's bilingual ability and bicultural heritage, for example in developing further linguistic proficiencies. Children were to be alienated from their language, and the admission of Gaelic to the curriculum in secondary or academic education can even be regarded as part of this process. The teaching style of these lessons is described in the special report on Education of 1936, compiled by *An Comunn Gaidhealach*, as 'arid, academic and given through the medium of English.'

The school stopped Gaelic as an integral part of the pupil's culture. Alienation of the speakers from their language and culture resulted in the decline of Gaelic as a home language and in the fostering of feelings of inferiority with respect to it. Parents who had come through such an 'educative' process were prepared in their turn further to alienate their children from Gaelic – even to the extent of deliberately using English as a home language. In those parts of the Highlands most open to contact with Lowland society and into which incomers might settle, Gaelic declined as a community language.

In the 20th century the school, an intrusive institution within Gaelic society, became an important agent for change in (or even control of) the social structure of Gaelic Scotland. The school encouraged attitudes towards the native language which ran counter to its maintenance. The school introduced new forms of knowledge into the intellectual life of Gaels which rarely linked up in any coherent way with the surviving elements of their culture. Thus, school subjects, taught through English, came to enjoy prestige and the interpretation of history from English text books generally from an English point of view accepted as received truth (such a pattern of acceptance of the authority of print being noted in regard to the Highlanders' reverence of the Bible).

The traditional lore of Gaelic Scotland, Ossianic and heroic folktales, ballads, folksongs, etc., which may have survived the opposition of the churches in Calvinist areas, enjoyed no great prestige within the community (only the esteem of individuals: the community's own village 'bards' and 'Gaelic scholars'). The village school (elementary/primary and junior

secondary) thus alienated the rooted Gaels from their home culture, and acted as a selection agency for the identification of brighter children. The (Senior) secondary school (or 'academy') received these promising children and processed them away from Gaelic society into the core society of modern Britain. Gaelic society thus came to lose its potential community leaders who, for the most part, sought opportunity elsewhere; few openings for their talents existed at home. Gaelic Scotland thus came to lose its intellectual and community-leading individuals (such positions cannot be regarded as collectively forming a 'class' in Gaelic society).

Such individuals, however, were not automatically lost to Gaelic cultural life, as they have been prominent in language-maintenance organisations (e.g. *An Comunn Gaidhealach,* district associations, etc.,) in Lowland centres. They have produced a very large part of the modern literature of Gaelic in the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries. This last phenomenon illustrates a further method of the social generation of artistic productions and literature: that which Professor Derick Thomson entitles the 'metropolitan'. In this mode the location of the writer or artist is in an urban centre (or at least in strong contact with it) and his or her productions are made specifically for the audience located in such centres. Gaelic publishing became almost entirely centred in Lowland cities and the system of clan and district societies provided large 'concert hall' audiences, particularly in Glasgow. Linguistic and social change has thus brought about a transformation of Gaelic literary culture from the medieval 'high culture' into a 'folk' culture in the early modern period

with the superimposition on this 'folk' culture of a minor but nonetheless important 'metropolitan' culture of the later modern period.

Although the literature of this 'metropolitan' culture circulated back into the rooted Gaelic society of the Highlands and Hebrides (notably via such agencies as *An Comunn Gaidhealach* and its *Mods*, commercial recordings and broadcasting), the life of the Gaelic 'colonies' of the Lowlands went ahead as a separate entity from that of the homeland. Gaelic churches and Highland district associations facilitated the maintenance of Gaelic culture and the support of the culture by bonds of fellowship and marriage within the Gaelic group. The use of Gaelic in leisure-time activities posed no particular problem to city Gaels. Their education in the Highlands had ensured that there was no insuperable cultural barrier to their assimilation into the mainstream of British society once they had settled into the cities or out of the Gaelic area. For the most part the Gaels, despite their cultural supports in the city, have followed the route of assimilation into Lowland society.

Within the Gaelic homeland, Gaelic became the language of a residual crofter working-class. As the middle and upper classes within this area consisted of individuals and their families who were for the most part incomers and non-Gaelic in language and culture, we may regard the class structure as one in which anglicised professionals and middle classes were superimposed upon a lower class whose ambitious members were removed into another social setting. The small 'upper class' of landowners, and such surviving clan chiefs as remained in the Gaelic area, was almost entirely English in speech and education.

Thus, in social intercourse across class barriers, Gaelic has had of necessity to give way to English as the incomer population has been conspicuously lacking in interest and proficiency with respect to Gaelic. After all this, it is surprising perhaps that there should have remained any life in the Gaelic speech community at all. But a 'Gaelic problem' still persisted (and was felt particularly in the early stages of infant education).

There was in the mid 20th century even a resurgence of Gaelic as a literary medium, with the poetic work of Sorley MacLean (*Somhairle MacGill-Eain*) and George Caimbeul Hay (*Deòrsa mac Iain Dheòrsa*) in the 1930s and 1940s, notably using new themes, style and poetic forms. The same period saw the development of community drama in Gaelic although the plays were almost entirely translations from Irish, Welsh and English plays. In 1952 the Gaelic quarterly magazine *Gairm* was founded, and introduced – or reintroduced – journalism to Gaelic and popular prose, handling Gaelic and modern subjects of every sort. Through this medium new types of short story in Gaelic have been promoted, and the serialisation of more lengthy prose works of fiction and non-fiction alike.

Since the mid-century a softening of official attitudes towards Gaelic has occurred. A possible explanation of this may lie in the penetration of the educational inspectorate, the bureaucracy of the county education authorities (set up under the 1918 Act) and the Civil Service by intelligent Gaelic speakers. By the 1950s Scottish Education Department memoranda concerning the Primary School and the Junior Secondary School were urging the use

of Gaelic as a medium of primary instruction to be followed through with a progressive programme of use and development of work in Gaelic in the successive stages of school. Teachers were encouraged to experiment in the use of Gaelic to teach 'geography, history, music, nature study, rural subjects, homecraft and games'. Experiment the teachers must, for only a literal handful of school texts in and on Gaelic were then in existence. Few of these were well-produced and attractive in appearance.

Three important studies of Gaelic children in Highland Schools were made in the 1930s, 40s and 50s of our present century. They are very revealing of the effects of the 1872 Act.

The first of these studies comprised a special report on education issued by *An Comunn Gaidhealach* in 1936 based on questionnaires circulated to schools and education authorities in the Gaelic area. It provides telling evidence of attitudes to Gaelic by parents and teachers. From the west coast of Inverness-shire came the statement:

'The majority of Gaelic-speaking parents are averse to the speaking of Gaelic to their children; they discourage the use of it so that their children have very imperfect English and no Gaelic.' And, 'There exists an animus against the language.' And again, 'The more efficiency I show in teaching Gaelic, the more I am disliked by the parents.' 'Parents object to Gaelic as a waste of time.'

These observations are very likely indicative of attitudes to the language on the part of parents who had internalised the attitudes of their schoolteachers in the previous generation following the 1872 Act.

Teachers observed: 'In a one-teacher school it is

impossible to devote time to Gaelic.' 'With twenty-eight on the roll, a teacher has no time to devote to Gaelic.' 'With sixty-four on the roll and only two teachers, it is impossible to devote time to Gaelic.'

Clearly such teachers felt that with a crowded curriculum Gaelic had to make way for more important work. They did not seem to regard use of Gaelic as a feasible teaching medium. These teachers also had carried forward the official attitudes towards Gaelic from their own schooldays. On the other hand, the use of Gaelic as a teaching medium is reported to be general in infant classes where the pupils were all native speakers. Further up the primary school in such cases its use was confined to Nature Study, Geography, Gardening, Music and History. More extensive use of Gaelic in teaching all subjects at this stage of education was reported at Dunan and Edinbane (Skye) and at Bayble (Lewis), and at Broadford (Skye) extensive use of Gaelic was reported for all subjects throughout the whole school.

A Lewis teacher reported: 'Even parents who are not native speakers are now eager to find their children taking an interest in Gaelic', and adds, 'I am convinced that, where Gaelic is methodically taught, the young speak English with more correctness and fluency than they do when its study is neglected'. The Report added that it was a common testimony from teachers of bilingual children that instead of Gaelic being a hindrance to the acquisition of English it was a help. The Report concluded with some eighteen recommendations urging an extension of the use of Gaelic and improvements in teaching methods in public education, availability of instruction in Gaelic to non-native speakers, the appointment of Gaelic-

speakers to administrative posts and improvement of the use and status of the language in Higher Education.

The second of these studies was undertaken in the winter of 1943/44 by Christina A. Smith into the measurement of intelligence in Gaelic and English amongst Gaelic-speaking children in rural Lewis. Her results show up significant cultural differences between Hebridean and mainland/urban children at this time.

Despite the obligatory Gaelic clause of the 1918 Education Act it was quite common throughout the Gaelic-speaking areas, even as late as the 1940s, that Gaelic-speaking children attending State schools were taught in English throughout the entire course of their schooling. Gaelic as a 'specific subject' was a feature of the curriculum in some secondary schools. Typically, then (and even now) the medium of instruction was English. The Scottish Council for Research in Education was in the 1930s aware of the depressed performance in intelligence tests of Gaelic-speaking children and had set up a committee on Bilingualism. Christina A. Smith's research into mental testing in Lewis Schools in 1943/44 and 1945 was its first research enterprise into this problem.

Smith observed that the problem she had studied 'has its genesis in the tacit assumption that Gaelic-speaking Scots form such a small minority that no special administration is needed'. She believes this to be the chief cause of the rapid decline of Gaelic in the 20th century. However, it was conspicuously the case that intelligence tests used with Hebridean children contained much cultural content which was com-

pletely alien to the child; circuses, clowns, railway stations, trains, watering cans, trees and garden flowers, sand-castles, lamp-posts, scooters, cricket bats, spinning tops and other toys. More basic cultural differences existed in that the Hebridean child was unused to pictures (still or moving). It must be borne in mind that travelling cinemas were rare in the Hebrides in the 1940's and BBC Medium and Long Wave stations were difficult to receive. Wall-pictures, reading books and comics were largely absent from the children's world and hence even the 'non-verbal' tests, which had been administered (through the medium of English), were imperfectly understood (in the language of instruction), the completion of pictures itself an unfamiliar exercise and the content of the pictures itself utterly strange to the child. Temperamental traits of the Hebridean child such as shyness, reticence, quietness, absence of striving against time (explained as products of Gaelic culture or results of unsureness in using a second language) had also seemed to depress intelligence test scores.

Smith attempted to overcome specifically linguistic factors by translating her tests into Gaelic and comparing scores between tests administered in and through Gaelic with those in which the original English was used. Smith drew attention to the psychological results of the education of infants in an alien language. These, so far as rural Lewis is concerned, were the depression of intelligence-test scores, resulting from the introduction of the second language before literacy and ease of expression had been achieved in the first language, apparent backwardness, aloofness and reticence at school where at the age of five the child had suddenly been introduced

into an English only situation. For the rural Lewis child the school was the only social situation (apart from the rare visitor) in which English was used as the medium of communication. It may be the case that the association of English with situations of insecurity and the felt need for defensive behaviour helps to explain the tenacity of Gaelic in the remote areas.

Smith's results and conclusion deserved a more widespread means of publication. Her forty-two page pamphlet suffered from brevity – and hence some lack of clarity in statement of her test results. But she was clear in reporting children's better response when tested in Gaelic, and the unsatisfactory nature of the standard tests then in use. She was somewhat diffident in enunciating reforms which her results seemed to indicate: (1) positive compensatory education to overcome bilingual children's temperamental and environmental deficiencies (2) greater use of Gaelic as a teaching medium in Gaelic-speaking districts (3) educational methods recognising the bilingual child's special advantages (4) postponement of the introduction of English until after the child is at ease in its school (5) teaching reading and writing first in Gaelic (6) revision of means of assessment to recognise the bilinguality of children and their cultural heritage, and the proper matching of test results to those of monolingual and mainland children (7) sympathetic administration by the education authorities. Some ten years elapsed between the publication of Smith's monograph and the introduction of Gaelic education schemes in Inverness-shire (then followed by Ross-shire and later by Argyll).

The Committee on Bilingualism of the Scottish Council for Research in Education was reconstituted

in 1956 and set up further studies of Gaelic bilingualism. Surveys were undertaken of Gaelic-speaking amongst primary children (especially infants) in 1957 and of first year secondary scholars having knowledge of Gaelic in 1959. The results were published in 1961.

The survey noted not only the general decline in numbers of speakers of Gaelic recorded in the censuses 1881-1951 and the contraction of the Gaelic-speaking area but also drew attention to the relatively greater decline in the incidence of Gaelic within the younger age-groups. During the period from 1881 onwards the 10-yearly census of Scotland has sought information as to the ability to speak Gaelic amongst the population aged three years and over. In 1881 231,594 persons claimed 'habitually' to speak Gaelic (out of a Scottish population of 3,425,151 aged three years or over). By 1951 Gaelic speakers had declined to 95,447 (out of 4,826,814) and by 1961 to 80,978 (out of 4,892,882). As a percentage these numbers correspond to 6.76% of the population of Scotland as 'habitually' Gaelic-speaking in 1881, 6.84% Gaelic-speaking in 1891, 1.98% in 1951 and 1.66% in 1961.

The Gaelic-speaking area in the period 1881/1891 extended throughout the Highlands and Hebrides. The percentage of Gaelic speakers dropped below 50% only in Caithness, urban areas around the Moray Firth and the extreme eastern and southern margins of the Grampians, the south end of Kintyre, eastern Arran and Bute. However, by 1951 considerable contraction had occurred. The 50%+ Gaelic-speaking area then enclosed only the western margins of Sutherland and Ross-shire, excluding Lochalsh and including only the peninsular area of western

Inverness-shire and north Argyll between Lochs Morar and Sunart. The Hebrides remained within this 50%+ area with the exception of northern and eastern Mull.

Amongst school children the two surveys of this study indicated a pronounced decline of Gaelic amongst the younger age groups. In infant departments in 1957 there were 941 children whose first language was Gaelic (0.5% of this age-group in Scotland). The total of primary aged children whose first or preferred language was Gaelic was 3,829 (or 0.6% of all Scottish primary children). Amongst first year secondary-aged children in the Highland area in 1959 those with some degree of claimed knowledge of Gaelic was 908 (or 1.2% of the total Scottish year-group). The downward trend of the ability to speak Gaelic is clear from these figures but two points must be borne in mind:-

(1) The figures represent a more rigorous definition of ability to speak Gaelic than does the official census.

(2) The survey does not account for Gaelic-speaking children outside the principal bilingual area. There are parents who maintain Gaelic as the home language despite migration to a non-Gaelic-speaking area.

It may be argued that the sporadic occurrence of Gaelic speech outside the recognisable Gaelic-speaking area is of little significance to the statistics of language in the Gaelic community. However, there have been increasingly important social influences upon the Gaelic home community from exiles in the Lowlands. Persons active in Gaelic-language movements have included such people of two cultures as

the late Lord Bannerman who was born and brought up in a working-class area of Glasgow of Gaelic-speaking parents at the turn of the century. As with children from Gaelic areas, he also claimed not to have learned English until entering primary school. However, the secondary school survey of the study 'Gaelic-speaking children in Highland Schools' did note the situation where Gaelic was taught as a secondary school subject outside the Highlands in such city schools as Bellahouston Academy and Woodside Senior Secondary (Glasgow) since 1946, Greenock High School and Norton Park (Edinburgh) both since 1958. Of a total of 89 first year pupils taking Gaelic as a specific subject in these schools, Gaelic was the first language of six pupils. Pupils with English as their first language claimed 'fair fluency' in Gaelic, six cases claimed 'fair fluency', 62 claimed to 'understand simple lessons' and could 'conduct elementary conversation in Gaelic.' This would seem to be an impressive achievement of success for the first year of study of a new foreign language. The survey pointed out that these children taking Gaelic are not as a rule children of Gaelic-speaking parents. Bellahouston Academy also organised six periods of Gaelic per week in its primary department. (From 1952 there had been Saturday morning Gaelic classes for nursery aged children at the Highlanders' Institute, Glasgow, and for primary school ages at Glasgow Boys' High School.)

The survey of Gaelic-speaking children in Highland schools also sought to investigate the social use of language and the social distribution of language within its field.

Concerning the relationship of language and occu-

pation the survey sets out the numbers and percentages of children in the first two years of primary school in the bilingual area of Argyll, Inverness and Ross-shire whose parents' occupations fall within seven status-ranked categories. (The bilingual area is defined as the area whose schools contain at least 8% of their children able to speak Gaelic.) The totals are interesting to note, and I have later added a table which brings out these proportions in terms of percentages.

Occupational Class of Parent	Totals of children of first language:		% of Total First language:	
	Gaelic	English	Gaelic	English
A. Professional	13	40	1	6
B. Civil/Public Servants	26	63	3	10
C. Commercial	32	111	4	17
D. Technical	181	162	20	24
E. Agriculture, Forestry	354	129	39	19
F. Manual workers	115	70	13	10
G. Unemployed	117	95	20	14

The survey is cautious in interpreting this data but the survey noted that there were proportionately more of categories A,B and C in the English group. The Survey was not correct in stating that for both English and Gaelic groups Category E (Agriculture, Forestry, Crofting) was numerically the most important. This is so for Gaelic children, but for the English group the largest occupational category was D (skilled technical occupations). Gaelic, however, predominated over English as the first language of the 'lower' status occupational groups taken as a whole from D (Technicians) 'downwards'. The ratios of first-language Gaelic to first-language English children ex-

pressed as percentages of each occupational category may be derived as follows:-

Occupational Class of Parents	% of Primary I and Primary II children whose first language was Gaelic	English
A. (professional)	75.5	24.5
B. (public servants)	70.8	29.2
C. (commercial)	77.6	22.4
D. (technical)	47.2	52.8
E. (agricultural)	26.7	73.3
F. (manual)	37.8	62.2
G. (unemployed)	44.8	55.2

It can be seen that the incidence of Gaelic as a first language of these primary schoolchildren is in fact somewhat weaker amongst the two 'lowest' status occupational groups: F (manual) and G (unemployed) than it is amongst children of occupational group E (agricultural). It would be tempting to suggest from these figures that language-loyalty is greatest amongst the crofter-agricultural occupational group than amongst the occupational groups of higher or lower social prestige. However, these figures are not in themselves sufficient data to point to such a general conclusion and the broadness of the occupational categories might very well obscure occupational groupings at either end of the scale which might provide evidence of the highest degrees of language-loyalty and language-maintenance as perhaps do ministers of religion and nomadic 'tinker' families (*na cèardan*). The connection between lang-

uage and occupational grouping to which the survey draws attention must be a complex one. There are probably at least three factors at work:-

(1) An incoming movement of professional, clerical, commercial, skilled technical and some at least of manual workers who are English monoglots from outwith the Gaelic area;

(2) A shift in favour of English from Gaelic as a home language on the part of 'educated' Gaelic speakers entering the 'higher' status groups and continuing in or returning to the Gaelic area;

(3) A mixed-marriage situation where a non-Gaelic spouse ensures that English becomes the language of the home.

In this latter case the incidence probably operates to different degrees in the various categories so that it is the potential occupants of occupational groups A, B, C and D who may leave the Gaelic area to train elsewhere and return with a non-Gaelic spouse. This whole social situation deserved much closer study than this or any other any census or survey of this problem had so far been able to give it. Considerable assumptions have been made about this problem by Gaels themselves, public opinion in Scotland generally, official policy and administrative agencies.

The survey of Gaelic-speaking children also attempted to investigate the use of the language in various aspects of the children's lives; in the home, with one parent or both, with brothers and sisters, in the playground, with other children, to the teacher, as a medium of school instruction, religious worship and community life. This report was particularly interesting at the time as it had been the only serious study of the social use of Gaelic to date. The figures

gave interesting and penetrating insights into the nature of Gaelic-English bilingualism and the social roles undertaken using the medium of Gaelic speech in the various local communities of the Gaelic-speaking area in the late 1950's.

The survey calculated that within the bilingual area: 'It will be found that of all the homes where both parents are Gaelic-speaking, only in 50% of those in Argyll is the language of the home Gaelic. The percentages for Inverness-shire and Lewis are 91% and 80% respectively.'

The survey further concluded that: 'As the child moves out from the Gaelic-speaking home, the tendency is for English to appear more and more as the language in the specific situation, the only exception to this is the strong Gaelic communities where Gaelic is spoken in the playground, and where the English-speaking child is under some pressure to speak Gaelic ... It will be noted that even in the strongest Gaelic-speaking communities, the language spoken to the teacher is almost invariably English. This accords with what has already been discovered about the usual medium of instruction in infant classes in Highland schools. The English-speaking child, on the whole, whether he (sic) is living in an English community or a Gaelic one, speaks English in any situation. The Gaelic- speaking child speaks Gaelic naturally to his (sic) sisters and brothers, Gaelic as a rule to the other children and in the playground except in the more anglicised areas, but English to his (sic) teacher except when he is encouraged to speak in Gaelic.'

It may be surprising that after over ten years following Smith's work on the mental testing of children in Lewis that it is reported that: 'Teaching in infant

departments is given mainly through the medium of English, whether the children are Gaelic-speaking or English-speaking ... In nearly all cases the teacher herself is Gaelic-speaking although she teaches in English.'

This situation changed considerably in the years following the survey as county advisers for Gaelic were appointed, and attitudes towards Gaelic improved within the schools. For example, in Harris, where the reported absence of Gaelic from half its primary schools in 1957 was certainly not the case by the early '70s with Gaelic being in general use in the infant classes – often in sole use.

The survey described the process of anglicisation within the Gaelic-speaking area of the Hebrides as follows: 'The process of anglicisation begins historically around the official centres of transport on the east side of the island opposite the mainland. Thereafter, an English 'pale' develops inland from the bridge or pierhead. It may be some time before the development makes any marked advance inland. This is still true of Stornoway in Lewis (it is also true of Tarbert (Harris), Lochmaddy (North Uist), Lochboisdale (South Uist), and Castlebay (Barra). In Skye, on the other hand, as can be seen around Portree and Kyleakin, the development once begun soon spreads. Before the 'breakthrough' occurs there are signs of the times to be seen here and there. What happens is that localities, such as Elgol in Skye at the present time, that were traditionally Gaelic, tend to become anglicised for various local reasons, and then the whole front proceeds to break up. That process is now nearing completion in Mull and Islay.'

OLD STOCK, NEW SHOOTS

'Thalla, Eudochais, is beachdaich.
A' chraobh a leag iad an uiridh –
seall! – cha n-fhaic thu 'stoc am bliadhna
aig lìonmhorachd nam fiùran uime....

'Ar cainnt 's ar cultur, car sealain
ged rachadh an leagadh buileach,
cuiridh am freumhan 's an seann stoc dhiubh
failleanan snodhaich is duilleach.'

Deòrsa Caimbeul Hay: STOC IS FAILLEANAN

'Come, Despondency, gaze on this sign and ponder.
The tree they felled in the year that is gone
look! seek for the stump – this Spring you cannot find it
for the young shoots around it so close they have grown...

'Our speech and culture – Despondency, consider -
though they be brought low for a time and forgotten by men,
the old stock still has its roots, and the roots they will bring us
shoots and sap, branches and leaves again.'

George Campbell Hay: *OLD STUMP AND YOUNG SHOOTS*

These verses were first published in 1948 and were probably composed during or shortly after the Second World War. The prospects for Gaelic were scarcely at a lower ebb. Any place or support for Gaelic came nowhere in the priorities for postwar social and economic reconstruction. Attitudes towards the language were instrumental: there was still a 'Gaelic problem'.

Children were still being raised in the language and needed educating out of it. Its maintenance and culture were matters only for private or scholarly concern. Its speakers and supporters were deferential in any case they made for the language – almost to the point of apology: putting their case in others' terms, not their own. Yet the poet had confidence and vision. Reading the verses at the time, I pondered to myself, 'If only...!' Over forty years on I have lived to see much of his confidence fulfilled.

The census returns for 1951 and 1961 produced yet further downturns in the spiral of decline of the language. Numbers of speakers dropped from 136,135 to 95,447 between 1931 and 1951, and again to 80,978 in 1961. But by 1971 numbers rose by almost 10% to 88,892, and although there was a relapse to 79,307 of speakers, or to 82,620 of all users of Gaelic in 1981, these last two censuses evidenced for the first time ever a growth in numbers of Gaelic speakers amongst school-age children and young people, and in 1981 the first ever increase in numbers in core Gaelic areas such as the Western Isles. Throughout the 1940s and for much of the '50s, the place of Gaelic in education, the media and in public life generally was muted and vestigial but change was on its way and its pace was to accelerate.

The recent situation was preceded by two developments of considerable significance for the social use of Gaelic. These developments were of opposite influence to one another in the processes of language maintenance. By the end of the 1950s the virtual disappearance from the Gaelic-speaking community of a significant body of monoglot Gaelic-speakers had come. In 1958 Gaelic-medium education schemes were introduced into the primary schools of the remaining bilingual areas of Inverness-shire subsequently followed in Ross-shire and in some measure in Argyll.

Of the 974 persons enumerated in the 1961 census as speaking Gaelic only, 406 were in the age-group 3-4 and 100 in the age- group 5-9 and hence should be regarded as potential learners of English. Of persons aged 65 and over, 309 represented the core of surviving Gaelic monolingualism and of this number only 65 were males.

It has been questioned whether, in the case of a minority language in decline, the language can long survive the disappearance of its last monoglot speakers. Saunders Lewis, the Welsh writer and nationalist politician observed of Welsh that: 'Soon after the monoglot speakers of Welsh have disappeared the language will die. For then it will be vain to talk of the spiritual and educational value of Welsh. It will not be a necessity for living in Wales, and when it will no longer be necessary anywhere, then it will collapse everywhere.'

His broadcast of 1962, given in Welsh and entitled *Tynged yr Iaith* (The Fate of the Language), had a galvanising effect on the language movement in Wales, bringing about the formation of such radical

and militant groups as the Welsh Language Society, the Adfer housing trust and others which secured publicity, action, and official recognition and use of Welsh in Wales. Nothing like this has so far happened in Scotland. Welsh writers like Gerald Morgan believe it possible as 'the compactness of the Gaelic-speaking area would make a campaign quite feasible'.

In criticism of such an extreme and pessimistic view as that of Saunders Lewis, evidence from the sociology of language may be brought forward of numerous instances of persistence within bilingual communities of separate languages in which different social roles are communicated. Whatever is to be the future pattern of Gaelic-English bilingualism in Scotland, the social situation whereby Gaelic has of necessity to be used to convey information within the adult speech community has now passed. Gaelic monolingualism in Scotland is not a feature of communities or even of families; it was by the 1960s a feature of a small number of isolated, and in the main elderly people – chiefly women. Gaelic continues to have a variety of roles: in worship, in entertainment, in social life, communication amongst the crowd at public events (shearings, 'fank days', agricultural shows, games, etc.).

Such uses might be described as the expressive or affective aspects of social life. Even within the Gaelic area it was rare for Gaelic to be used by platform speakers at public events, in political meetings, in business life (except for individual buying and selling in shops and the like), in any form of official communication, public advertisement or written sign, in council or committee meetings (until the formation of *Comhairle nan Eilean* in 1975). The instrumental as-

pects of social life are, and in modern times in large measure always have been, communicated through the English language. Hence it would not be inconceivable that some persistence of Gaelic speech may occur well after the passing of effective monolingualism whilst there remains some perceived need or preference to handle certain important aspects of social life through the medium of Gaelic. The present situation is one in which this state of affairs may be said to be perpetuating itself.

The introduction of Gaelic as a medium of instruction into the county primary schools in the bilingual area from 1958 was the first in a number of changes in attitude and policy towards the language by public authorities. That this improvement of attitudes towards Gaelic occurred at a time when the problem of public communication in the Highlands may be said to be solved, might be coincidental or casually connected. Romantic Jacobitism had, for example, become a fashionable fad once the political and military Jacobite threat to Lowland society had collapsed and died. In like manner the Gaelic Education Scheme might be argued to be a preservationist move by the Education Authorities whose chief work, the universal promotion of the knowledge of spoken and written English, had been accomplished. Alternatively a latent function of the scheme might be that of more effective assimilation of English by the schoolchildren resulting from their introduction to literacy occurring through the medium of the more familiar mother-tongue of their homes. However, the inception of this scheme marks a turning point for the relationship of Gaelic and the public authorities. In the following year a number of other now official policies might be

regarded as now positively contributing to more favourable circumstances for the language.

In broadcasting, Gaelic programmes on the Scottish Home Service (Radio 4) increased from some two hours weekly in 1959 to about three hours in 1967 and to almost four hours weekly by 1970. Unfortunately, from January 1971 the BBC reduced its weekly output in Gaelic to between 2¼ and 2¾ hours. The Gaelic minority might be said to be entitled to between 8 and 10 hours weekly as a proportion of total broadcast time. The BBC claimed to broadcast 3½ hours weekly but this was not factually the case.

The BBC also claimed to broadcast and to spend on behalf of its Gaelic public in greater proportion than their numbers in the population, as a whole, would justify. Assuming Gaelic programmes were not significantly more expensive to produce, the computation of the proportion of broadcast time devoted to Gaelic hardly supported this claim. By the end of the 1960s a short weekly Gaelic musical programme was being broadcast on BBC TV Scotland as well as a monthly current affairs programme and occasional Gaelic services and plays.

Improvements in the financial support of *An Comunn Gaidhealach*, then the principal language promotional organisation, by Government and local authorities and others, enabled it to appoint a professional director and a full time public relations officer in 1965. In the same year the Highlands and Islands Development Board was established which, through its social grants, has given some assistance to Gaelic publishing and promotional events. Government subsidy and charitable trust contributions

enabled a historical dictionary to be commenced by Glasgow University (1966); and in 1969 the passage of the Local Authorities (National *Mòd*) Bill in Parliamentary time made available by the Government enabled Scottish local authorities who wished to do so to provide financial aid for the National *Mòd*. The Government had already promised annual sums of money for the subsidisation of Gaelic books and in 1969 the Gaelic Books Council was established under the aegis of the Glasgow University Celtic Department. Prior to its establishment some two or three new Gaelic titles were being published annually, and in its first full year of operation it had stimulated 37 new titles (including reprints).

Schools broadcasting in Gaelic commenced early in 1970. The previous Labour administration was prepared to sanction and to admit for subsidy the use of Gaelic on road signs but this was only taken up by a few district authorities for village signs. The incoming Conservative government in 1970 stated through the new Secretary of State for Scotland that it intended to maintain and strengthen these new policies for Gaelic. In 1970 improving financial support of *An Comunn Gaidhealach* enabled it to appoint a deputy Director for its work in the Western Isles. The Highland Book Club (*Club Leabhar*) commenced its first issues in 1970. It produced six/seven titles each year in Gaelic, English and bilingually over about ten years. The English titles subsidised the Gaelic publications. *An Comunn* published a bilingual fornightly newspaper *Sruth* between 1965-69.

Impatience with the slowness of results from the existing Gaelic Societies led to the establishment in 1971 of *Comunn na Cànain Albannaich,* modelled on

the Welsh Language Society and desirous of copying its methods of militant non-violent civil disobedience. However in practice it functioned more as 'think-tank', opening up new issues for public debate.

During the '60s, Gaelic became the first language of instruction in the infant classes of the bilingual area. It also became a medium of instruction for subjects other than religious education throughout the primary stage and the language of the Gaelic periods at least in the older primary and junior secondary schools. In the senior secondary schools academic education was handled through the medium of English almost entirely, Gaelic being taught even to Gaelic-speaking children in English! There were two senior secondary schools within the bilingual area (the Nicolson Institute, Stornoway, Lewis, and Portree High School, Skye). Some five or six other senior secondary schools served the bilingual area: Lochaber High School, Inverness High School and Inverness Royal Academy (Inverness-shire), Dingwall Academy (Ross-shire), Dunoon High School and Oban High School (Argyllshire). Each of these schools has published yearly magazines with a good selection of Gaelic items.

There was a shift away from traditional methods in the Gaelic classroom. Modern methods were introduced to teach reading through the medium of Gaelic. As the subject continued into older primary and junior secondary stages there came to be a move away from a formal concern with the insistence on the intricacies of traditional Gaelic spelling and punctilious adherence to traditional grammatical forms, which are moribund in everyday speech, and precise translations into English.

Instead, project work and comprehension have replaced the formal and abstract unfavourable attitudes towards the language amongst schoolchildren. In Shawbost, Lewis, a very successful series of projects in technical subjects in the Junior Secondary School was allied to the restoration of local industrial archaeology (a 'Norse'-type mill), involving Gaelic technical terms and the provision of a village museum in which the history and contemporary life of the village is annotated in Gaelic as well as English. Research has also been undertaken into Gaelic place-names for the School of Scottish Studies Edinburgh University by junior secondary schools in Harris together with projects on the local Harris tweed industry, folk medicine and the like. There is a danger in this type of work that Gaelic may come to be identified exclusively with traditional folk life and that work on old mills, collections of village bygones and traditional cures will only serve to link Gaelic in the minds of the children with a way of life which is superseded – or at the best moribund. Schools radio programmes in Gaelic (started early in 1970) have been some corrective as they have featured new developments in fishing, navigation, agriculture and industry.

In Inverness-shire Gaelic was introduced as a second language into mainland primary schools including the Inverness area itself. This development proved to be popular and the language became part of the curriculum in about two-thirds of the authority's mainland schools. In 1962 Gaelic was introduced at Higher and Ordinary grades of the S.C.E. for learners.

The situation prior to local government reorganisation in 1975 had been marked by a more sympathetic and liberal attitude towards the language by public authorities generally. Gaelic education schemes operated in the Gaelic areas at primary school level but academic education was still typically in English and remote from the home. The junior secondary schools in the home areas had however, extended the uses of Gaelic as a school language. A new literate generation of young Gaelic-speaking adults had come through the schools since 1958. This, coming after an important Gaelic literary revival, had implications for the strengthening of those elements of Gaelic culture which were viable. The survival of Gaelic into the present day as the spoken language of a tenacious folk community and its cultivation as a literary medium drawing from native and outside sources may be regarded as an achievement deserving encouragement and support.

Survival and adaptations have occurred in the face of persistent adverse circumstances over a long period. Hence the explanation of the persistence of Gaelic language and culture as a case of 'cultural lag' is not at all adequate. This study must now turn to a consideration of what explanations may account for the survival of Gaelic as community speech and the processes of language-maintenance and language-loyalty associated with them.