

Two Voices, One Message – Including Gaelic in Interpretation

VSG Seminar

11 April 2008

Inverness

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Fonn' s Duthchas: Land and Legacy

Highland 2007 National Exhibition

Summative Evaluation

Venues



Inverness Museum & Art Gallery

Inverness, 13 January – 17 March 2007



Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum

Glasgow, 6 April – 10 June 2007



National Museum of Scotland

Edinburgh, 29 June – 2 September 2007



Museum nan Eilean

Stornoway, 22 September – 1 December 2007

The Exhibition

- Part of Highland 2007
- History, culture, music, language, geology and geography
- National Museums Scotland, National Galleries of Scotland, National Library of Scotland and Highland and Island museums

Background on Exhibition Approach

- Peer review and consultation
- Gaelic speakers on steering group
- Designers with relevant experience



National
Museums
Scotland



John Ridge of Shetland, 1850-1860
John the man 'Widdie, a widdie manna manna land in Loochavaan.
Widdie widdie widdie widdie

First Map of Scotland, 1791-1801
This map is one of the earliest surviving maps of the Highlands.
It was first drawn by Thomas Penn, a landscape painter
and landscape architect, and it shows the Highlands as a
'barren wilderness' and 'very wild in the north'.
[Source: National Library of Scotland]



Os cionn a' Ghlinn

Ainmhidhean na Gàidhealtachd

Monarchs of the Glens Highland Wildlife

Tha a' Ghàidhealtachd is na h-Eileanan air a bhith nan dachaigh dha raon fhàs-dh-bheatha a tha eadar-dhealaichte, àrda chaochlaidheach. Tha mòran dhuibh, mar am madadh-allaidh is am biobhair air a dhol à bòth o chionn fhada.

Tha mòran de na h-àitean ann a ch'fhaodadh an dhaigh air èirigh à obair dhaoine. Bho thàinig slaigh nan tuathanach o chionn 6,000 bliadhna, chaidh na seann fhearainn choillteach a chall, còmhla ris a' chuid mhòr de ainmhidhean. Tha connspaid co-cheangailte ri sreamaichean airson toirt beathaichean mar am madadh-allaidh air ais ann an oidhpean iomadh chailte ainmhidhean ath-shuidheachadh. Tha aonta nas coitcheinne a' nochdadh mu bhith ag àrdachadh àrainneachd na Gàidhealtachd le fearann-choillteach nas dùthchasach is leis a' bhith-iomadachd a thig na chois.

Cha deach fàilte a chur air gach ainmhidh a chaidh a thoirt a-steach às ùr. Chaidh gràineagan a thoirt a-steach a dh'Uibhist a Deas anns na 1970an ach tha iad a-nis a' cur àireamhan còin gheireil ann an cumhachd le bhith ag ithe an cuid uighean. Chaidh tansachadh a chur air chois o chionn phòirt airson coloinidhean nan eun a dhèan ach tha buidhnean airson dìon ainmhidhean air feuchainn ri na gràineagan a thoirt far an eilein gu sàbhailte.

The Highlands and Islands have been home to a varied and ever-changing array of wildlife. Many like the wolf and beaver are long since extinct.

Many of the natural habitats that we now see in the Highlands are the result of human activity. Since the arrival of farming people some 6,000 years ago, the ancient woodlands have been lost, together with much of their wildlife. Controversy surrounds schemes to reintroduce animals like the wolf in an attempt to restore lost diversity of animal life. A more general agreement is developing today about enhancing the Highland landscape with more native woodland and the biodiversity that it brings with it.

Not all past introductions are welcome. Hedgehogs were imported to South Uist in the 1970s, but they are now endangering local bird populations by eating their eggs. A recent cull was organised to preserve the bird colonies, but animal welfare groups have tried to remove the hedgehogs safely from the island.



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The Standing Stones – 'The sons of the' (said to mean, Standing Stones of Stenness). The standing stones of Stenness have attracted many theories as to why erected here and why. At 5,000 years old, they are older than Stonehenge in Wiltshire, England.

Creideamh Eile

An Alternative Faith

Bha coimhearsnachdas Gàidhealach air an cumail suas le creideas lùidhe ann an cumhachd dheuman is chlàchan bualadh agus ann an cumhachdan os-càirdean san ùrnuiseachd. Anns a' chomhearsnachd, bhathas a' coimhead le eagal air an fheadhainn aig an robh an 'dà-shealladh'.

Chithear taobh eile de chreideamh air Ghàidhealtachd is sna h-Eileanan anns na seudagan, ùrnuighean is laoidhean a bh' air an cruinneachadh is air an ghlèidheadh le sgoiltearan aig deireadh na 19mh linne. Bhathas a' cleachdadh seunan òmaid, criostal is fosail airson slàinte dhaoinne is bheathaichean a lorg is a ghlèidheadh. Bha lusain ionadail gan cleachdadh còmhla ri iocahlaint thraidiseanta.

Alongside formal religion, Highland communities were sustained by a strong belief in the power of charms and amulets, and supernatural powers in the landscape. Those with the gift, or curse, of 'second sight' were regarded with awe in their community.

Another aspect of faith in the Highlands and Islands can be seen in the charms, prayers and hymns collected and preserved by scholars in the late 19th century. People believed that rare and unusual objects had special powers. Charms made from amber, crystal and fossils were used to seek and keep the health of people and animals. Traditional 'folk medicine' also used local plants and herbs.



All the 'charms' made, but some from the Highlands, from 1860s to 1900. Many 'charms' were made from dried herbs, and some from the bones of the dead. As the price of such was very low, the 'charms' were cheap.



Creideamh Eile

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Evaluation Brief

The purpose of the evaluation was to measure the response of visitors to the exhibition, including:

- Visitor interest and awareness
- Visitor response to exhibition interpretation
- Impact of the exhibition on visitors

Evaluation Process

- Self-completion survey
- Piloted in Inverness
- Feedback from Gaelic speakers
- Survey available in Gaelic and English

Survey Sample Sizes

	Total # of surveys collected	Surveys collected in Gaelic
Inverness	141	3
Glasgow	33	1
Edinburgh	140	0
Stornoway	14	0

Evaluation Results

(Feedback relating to Gaelic)

Interpretation

- Importance of including Gaelic?
- Best way of representing Gaelic?

Exhibition Impact

- What did visitors like the most?
- What were visitors surprised by?

Profile of Respondents

Where visitors were from:

	Local	Elsewhere in Scotland	Elsewhere in the UK	Overseas
Inverness	45%	15%	9%	2%
Glasgow	42%	27%	18%	3% (1 person)
Edinburgh	28%	17%	12%	42%
Stornoway	72%	21%	0%	7% (1 person)

Profile of Respondents

Did visitors speak or understand Gaelic?

	Yes, fluently	Yes, a little	No
Inverness	2%	16%	82%
Glasgow	6%	21%	73%
Edinburgh	1.5%	11.5%	87%
Stornoway	28%	36%	36%

Importance of Including Gaelic

How important did visitors think it was to include Gaelic?
(1 = not important at all; 5 = very important)

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean Score
Inverness	6%	6%	10%	26%	51%	4.1
Glasgow	0%	9%	21%	15%	55%	4.3
Edinburgh	2%	4%	17%	17%	59%	4.3
Stornoway	0%	0%	14%	29%	57%	4.4

Best Way of Representing Gaelic

What did visitors think was the best way to represent Gaelic alongside English in exhibitions?

	Inv.	Glas.	Edin.	Storn.
Full translations in Gaelic alongside English text	87%	76%	73%	93%
Gaelic summaries of English text	33%	9%	13%	7%
Translations of key headings only into Gaelic	10%	9%	9%	0%
Other	7%	6%	4%	0%

Best Way of Representing Gaelic

Further Suggestions:

“English translations from Gaelic text”

“Full translations in English alongside Gaelic text”
(Edinburgh, no Gaelic)

“Full translations - English with Gaelic underneath”
(England, no Gaelic)

“Full translations when relating to Highlands and Islands”
(Inverness, no Gaelic)

“Only Gaelic speakers entitled to decide”

Best Way of Representing Gaelic

“A few captions to educate people” (*Edinburgh, no Gaelic*)

“Interesting for tourists to see the Gaelic”
(*Edinburgh, a little Gaelic*)

“As a Dutchman it’s difficult to understand Gaelic - but keep it”
(*Netherlands, no Gaelic*)

“Something on the language itself” (*Aberdeen, no Gaelic*)

“Found English before Gaelic slightly confusing”
(*Peebles, no Gaelic*)

Best Way of Representing Gaelic

“No interest in it” (*USA, no Gaelic*)

“No need for Gaelic” (*unknown location, no Gaelic*)

“Does not matter” (*unknown location, no Gaelic*)

“Doesn't matter - can't speak it” (*India, no Gaelic*)

“As all Gaelic speakers speak English I'd drop the Gaelic and give more information in English – wouldn't it be better to have French, German, Italian so tourists can find out more?”

(*England, no Gaelic*)

What did visitors like the most?

- Open ended question
- Responses were categorised

	Category	Response Rate
Inverness	Interpretation	3% (1% Gaelic)
Glasgow	Gaelic	6%
Edinburgh	Inclusion of Gaelic	5%

What did visitors like the most?

“The use of Gaelic” (*Edinburgh, no Gaelic*)

“I liked the use of Gaelic language” (*England, no Gaelic*)

“That is has both English and Gaelic” (*USA, a little Gaelic*)

“Dual language” (*Canada, no Gaelic*)

“Nice to hear Gaelic spoken” (*USA, no Gaelic*)

“Video talking about the Gaelic language” (*Australia, no Gaelic*)

“Gaelic presentation and promotion – the scale encompasses everything, not romanticised” (*Edinburgh, fluent Gaelic*)

What were visitors surprised by?

- Open ended question
- Responses were categorised
- Around a third of visitors surprised by something
- Edinburgh: 8% mentioned Gaelic
- Inverness: 1.5% mentioned Gaelic

What were visitors surprised by?

“I did not know there was Gaelic” (*Mexico, no Gaelic*)

“I did not know anything about Gaelic” (*USA, no Gaelic*)

“The translations” (*France, no Gaelic*)

“First exhibition where everything is in Gaelic” (*Ireland, no Gaelic*)

“How many people speak Gaelic” (*England, no Gaelic*)

“That there is a foundation to keep Gaelic alive” (*Switzerland, no Gaelic*)

“How much Gaelic is in our language” (*England, no Gaelic*)

“[There are] 40 different words for rain in Gaelic” (*Edinburgh, no Gaelic*)

Conclusion?

Divided Opinion

“Far too little Gaelic [included in the film]”
(Inverness, fluent Gaelic)

“More Gaelic [would improve the exhibition]”
(Inverness, fluent Gaelic)

“I think the Gaelic police are taking over”
(England, no Gaelic)

“Drop the Gaelic” *(England, no Gaelic)*

Suggestions how to improve the exhibition

“[Audio] samples of Gaelic text would be interesting”

(England, no Gaelic)

“Poetry in Gaelic to listen to” *(England, no Gaelic)*

“More information on how many people still speak Gaelic”

(Switzerland, no Gaelic)

“An exhibition on Gaelic poets” *(Galashiels, no Gaelic)*