

Na Gàidheil an Alba

The Gaels and Gaelic in Scotland

Tuineachadh agus leudachadh nan Gàidheal ann an Albainn 400-900

A rèir choltais thàinig luchd-labhairt na Gàidhlig do dh'Albainn à Eirinn anns an treas agus a' cheathramh linn CE. Stèidhich iad rioghachd air an tug iad an t-airm 'Dal Riata' air taobh star Alba, gu ìre mhòir co-ionnan ri criochan Siorramachd Earra Ghàidheal. Bha am priomh dhaingneach ann an Dun Ad, agus faodaidh sibh tadhail an sin agus tlachd a ghabhail ann san latha seo fhèin. Tha e tuath air Ceann Loch Gilp. Uidh air n-uidh, sgaoil buaidh nan Gàidheal air feadh na mòr-chuid de dh'Albainn, 's dh'fhàg seo làrach air ainmean àiteachan. Mheasgaich na Gàidheil leis na Cruthnich, agus le treubhan eile ann an Albainn, agus bha làmh-an-uachdair aca mus tòanig an nàoidheamh linn. Anns an àm bhuidhmhor seo, bha a' Ghàidhlig ga bruidhinn aig buill de theaghlaich rioghail Alba. Thàinig treubhan eile do dh'Albainn aig an àm seo, gu sònraichte Lochlannaich is Danaich, agus thuinich iad gu paitl ann an Innse Gall agus air a' chòrsa an iar.



Lorg-coise Fhearghais, an Dùn Àd, an Cill Mhàrtainn.
Footprint of Fergus, Dun Add, Kilmartin.

Gaelic settlement and expansion in Scotland 400-900

Gaelic speakers appear to have arrived in Scotland from Ireland in the third and fourth centuries CE. They established a kingdom called 'Dal Riata' on the west of Scotland, broadly corresponding to the county of Argyll. Their main fortress was at Dun Add, which can be visited and enjoyed to the present. It lies north of Lochgilphead. Gradually Gaelic influence spread across most of Scotland, leaving clear traces in place-names. The Gaels merged with the Picts and other ethnic groups within Scotland, and gained overall supremacy by the ninth century. During this supremacy, Gaelic was spoken by members of the Scottish royal line. The period witnessed the arrival of other ethnic groups in Scotland, most notably Norsemen and Danes, who established a strong presence in the Hebrides and the western seaboard.

Treubhan is tighearnasan 900-1500

Bha Gàidhealtachd Alba anns na Meadhan Aoisean an sealbh fhineachan fa leth, agus bha cuid dhiubh sin cho làidir 's gun robh e nan comas 'tighearnasan' a chruthachadh, coltach ri Tighearnas nan Eilean, a bha fo smachd Chlann Dòmhnaill Ile. Bha geugan de Chloinn Dòmhnaill, mar a bha Clann Raghnaill, a' cumail smachd air Uibhist agus còrsa an ear-thuath Alba. Aig àird an comais, bha Tighearnan nan Eilean a' riaghlaigh larachd Rois air tìr-mòr. 'S e 'righrean', 's chan e 'Tighearnan', a theirte ri Tighearnan nan Eilean anns na clàir Ghàidhlig. Bhiodh Tighearnan nan Eilean a' fastadh agus a' cumail theaghlachean ainmeil de bhàird, luchd-ceàirde, luchd-ciùil agus luchd-litreacais. Gheibh sinn tlachd ann an sampail den cuid obrach gus an là an-diugh, gu sònraichte anns na croisean-cloiche snaidhte, ann an àiteachan mar Chille Mhàrtainn agus Eilean I. Bha stri daonnan eadar Tighearnan nan Eilean agus righrean Alba, agus chaill iad an còraichean ann an 1493. Mar thoradh air sin, thàinig cinnidhean eile am follais, gu sònraichte Clann Mhic Coinnich air taobh an ear-thuath Alba agus anns na h-Eileanan A-muigh, agus na Caimbeulaich air an taobh an iar-dheas agus anns na h-Eileanan A-staigh. Bha dualchas làidir Gàidhlig aig na cinnidhean sin cuideachd, agus bha iad gu math seòlta nan dòighean-malaire le righrean Alba, air chor 's gun robh cumhachd anabarrach làidir aca nan criochan fhèin agus nas fhaide air falbh.

Kindreds and lordships 900-1500

Gaelic Scotland in the Middle Ages consisted of kindreds who, in some cases, were sufficiently strong to create and maintain 'lordships', such as the Lordship of the Isles, which was dominated by the MacDonalds of Islay, with branches of Clan Donald, such as the Clan Ranald family, holding sway in Uist and the north-west mainland. At its fullest extent the Lordship of the Isles embraced the Earldom of Ross, on the mainland. The Lords of the Isles were called 'kings' not 'Lords', in Gaelic records. The Lords of the Isles commissioned and maintained significant families of poets, craftsmen, musicians and literary specialists. Examples of their work, notably the carved stone crosses, can still be seen and enjoyed today in places such as Kilmartin and Iona. The Lords of the Isles lived in tension with the Scottish Crown, and they were forfeited in 1493. As a result, other kindreds rose to prominence, most obviously the Mackenzies in the north-west mainland and the Outer Hebrides, and the Campbells in the south-west mainland and the Inner Hebrides. These kindreds too maintained a vibrant Gaelic culture, and were very astute in their dealings with the Scottish Crown, so that they wielded great political power in their own territories and beyond.



Loch an Dàil, Ile.
Lochindaal, Islay.



Buachaille Etibh Mòr.
The Big Shepherd of Etive.

Cinnidhean is cathan 1500-1700

Bha cinnidhean na bu lugha, no 'clannan', mar a theirte riutha, cumanta am meags Gàidheil Alba. Bha iad gan riaghlaigh fhèin fo smachd 'Cinn-cinnidh', ach bha iad gu math tric a' stri ri cinnidhean na bu mhòtha mar Chlann Mhic Coinnich agus na Caimbeulaich. Thachair cuid de na h-ionnsaighean a bu mhiosa clù aig an àm seo, gu sònraichte Mort Għlinne Comhaïnn ann an 1692, anns an robh pàirt aig na Caimbeulaich agus na Dòmhallaich agus riaghlas Alba. Rinn an Siathamh agus a' Chiad Righ Seumas oidhisp air daoine Gallda a bha na bu 'mhodhaile' agus na bu 'ghniomhaiche' a stèidheachadh anns na h-Eileanan, nam meags Fir-ghniomh Fhiobha, a bha air an cur do Leòdhais rè tamail. 'S ann le rùn na Gàidheil 'bhorba' a chìuineachadh a rinneadh Reachdan Eilean I ann an 1609, far an deachadh a mhineachadh gum feumte na mic a bu shine aig na cinn-chinnidh a chur don Ghalladhachd gan oideachadh. Bha Gàidheil le Gàidhlig an sàs anns na Cogaidhean Siobhalta anns an t-seachdamh linn deug, gu ìre mhòir air taobh air Rioghalach, ged a bha na Caimbeulaich, mar eisimpleir, air taobh nan Cùmhantach. 'S ann aig an àm seo a choisinn Gàidheil na h-Alba droch alladh airson 'borbalachd', mas fhior, agus a' mhòr-chuid den aimhreit ga brosnachadh bhon taobh a-muigh an leithid de dhòigh 's gun rachadh na cinnidhean an amhaichean a chèile. Tha aimhreitean an ama seo a' tighinn am follais ann am bàrdachd is òrain Ghàidhlig. Chaith an Tiomadh Nuadh fhoillseachadh ann an Gàidhlig Alba ann an 1767, agus thòisich linn ùr anns an d'ionnsaich na Gàidheil leughadh le bhith a' cleachdadh leabhrachaean spioradail, mar a bu trice.

Clans and battles 1500-1700

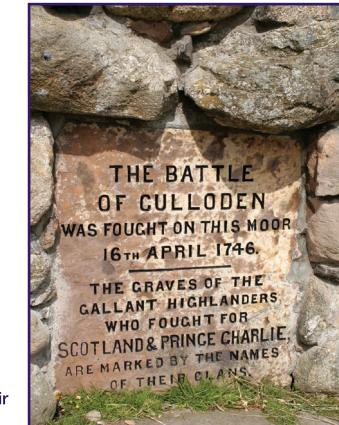
Smaller kindreds or 'clans' were common in Gaelic Scotland. They ruled themselves under a 'chief', but they were frequently in tension with the larger kindreds such as the MacKenzies and the Campbells. Some of the most notorious incidents in 'clan' history occurred in this period, principally the Massacre of Glencoe in 1692, which involved Campbells and MacDonalds as well as the Scottish government. Attempts were made by King James VI and I to colonise the Hebrides with more 'law-abiding' and 'industrious' Lowlanders, including the Fife Adventurers who were settled temporarily in Lewis. The effort to reduce the 'barbarian' Highlanders to order is also reflected in the Statutes of Iona of 1609, which laid down that the eldest sons of Highland chiefs were to be educated in the Lowlands. Gaelic-speaking Highlanders were involved in the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century, principally on the side of the Royalists, although the Campbells, for example, took the Covenanting side. This was the period when Gaelic Scotland gained a reputation for alleged 'lawlessness', fomented mainly by external intervention which often set clan against clan. Gaelic poetry and song reflect the turmoil and conflict of the times.

Ar-a-mach is fuadach 1700-1800

Thàinig tuilleadh aimhreit am follais anns a' Ghàidhealtachd anns an ochdamh linn deug, nuair a thug mòran de na cinnidhean Gàidheal taic do dh'adhbhar nan Seumasach, agus a chaidh iad a shabaid ann an Ar-a-mach 1715 agus Ar-a-mach 1745. Thàinig Ar-a-mach 1745 gu crich ann am Blàr Chùl Lodair, taobh a-muigh Inbhir Nis, anns a' Għiblin 1746, nuair a chaidh an ruag air na Seumasach agus a rinneadh oidhisp a bu treasa dualchas na Gàidhlig a mhùchadh. Chaidh cumhachdan dùthchasach nan ceann-cinnidh a chasd, agus beag air bheag chaidh na cinn-chinnidh nan uachdarain, 's iad an geall air beartas eaconomach an oighreachdan a chur am meud, mar a bha feallsanachd an 'leasachaidh' a' moladh. Thàinig tuathanach chaorach às a' Għalldachd an dèidh 1760, agus sgoil an treudan mu thuath à Siòrramachd Shruigħlea. Chuir iad bailtean is luchd-tuinidh às am bun ann an upraid ris an cante gu cumanta 'Fuadach nan Gàidheal'. Thug ath-chruthachadh nan oighreachdan air na Gàidheil imrich a dhèanamh don 't-Saoghal Ur' ('s gu sònraichte do na Carolinas) cho tràth ri 1730, ach dh'fhàs sruth na h-imrich na bu bhraise anns an dàrna leth den linn. Tha an gnothach ga luaidh ann am bàrdachd is òrain Ghàidhlig. Chaith an Tiomadh Nuadh fhoillseachadh ann an Gàidhlig Alba ann an 1767, agus thòisich linn ùr anns an d'ionnsaich na Gàidheil leughadh le bhith a' cleachdadh leabhrachaean spioradail, mar a bu trice.

Rebellions and clearances 1700-1800

Further conflict developed in the Highlands in the eighteenth century, when many Highland clans took up the Jacobite cause, and fought in the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745. The 'Forty-five Rebellion ended at the Battle of Culloden, outside Inverness, in April 1746, when the Jacobites were defeated and an even more vigorous attempt was made to suppress Gaelic culture. The heritable powers of clan chiefs were abolished, and gradually the chiefs became landlords, intent on developing the economic potential of their estates, in keeping with the philosophy of 'improvement'. Lowland sheep-farmers were introduced from the 1760s, their flocks spreading northwards from Stirlingshire, and displacing townships and tenants in a process popularly known as the 'Highland Clearances'. As a result of reorganisation of estates, Highlanders were already emigrating to the 'New World' (and especially the Carolinas) as early as the 1730s, but the pace of emigration quickened considerably in the second half of the century. The process is chronicled in Gaelic song and verse. The New Testament was published in Scottish Gaelic in 1767, and a new era in Gaelic literacy, based principally on religious texts, began.



Clach-cuimhneachan Blàr Chùl Lodair
Battle of Culloden monument.

Imrich is aimhreit 1800-1900

Dh'fhalbh mòran Ghàidheal às an dachaighean gu bailtean na Galldachd, Ameirioga a Tuath, Astràilia agus Sealann Nuadh, gu seachd àraid an déidh Gort a' Bhuntàta ann an 1846. Cha robh dòigh nach deachaidh a' Ghaidhlig a lagachadh leis an imrich seo, ach chaidh a' chànan a neartachadh gu ire le leabhrachean de ghnè spioradail, a bhiodh Comainn nan Sgoiltean Gàidhlig a' cleachdadh bho 1811. Rinn na Gàidheil anns an bailtean oidhrip mhòr air dreach ùr a chur air dualchas na Gàidhlig, agus goireasan clò-bhuailte, spioradail is saoghalta, a chur an taigse nan Gàidheal. Dh'fhàs buaidh na Galldachd air a' Ghàidhealtachd agus na h-Eileanan na bu treasa nuair a nochd bàtaichean-smùide agus rathaidean-iarainn. Thàinig Gàidheil anns an bailtean, agus Lunnainn nam measg, agus Gàidheil air na croitean còmhla airson bacadh a chur air tuilleadh aintighearnais bho na h-uachdarain. Gus an croitean a chumail bho bhith air an lùghdachadh, stèidhich iad 'buidhnean fearainn' gu bhith a' sabaid an aghaidh poilis is oifigearanan oighreachdan. Thachair Blàr a' Chumhaing, a ghlabh aire dhaoine, ann an 1882 anns an Eilean Sgitheanach, nuair a ghabh croitearan am bad a' phoilis agus oifigearanan Siòrram Siòrramachd Inbhir Nis. Chuir seo spionnadh anns an oidhrip a rinneadh anns na bliadhna chan a bha air thoiseach. Ann an 1886, rinneadh Achd Gabhaltasan nan Croitearan (Alba) na lagh, agus thug an t-Achd seo seamhachd do na croitearan agus dan càraichean.

Emigration and agitation 1800-1900

The nineteenth century witnessed immense displacement of the Highland population, to the Lowland cities, North America, Australia and New Zealand, very obviously following the Potato Famine of 1846. This inevitably weakened Gaelic, but the language was strengthened to a significant degree by introduction of books, often religious, which were used by Gaelic School Societies from 1811. Gaels in the cities played a major part in 'modernising' Gaelic culture, and developing printed resources, secular as well as sacred. The arrival of steamships and railways exposed the Highlands and Islands even more strongly to Lowland influences. Displaced Highlanders in the cities, including London, and Highlanders on crofts at home combined forces from 1870 to resist further pressure from landlords. To stop erosion of their crofts, they formed 'land leagues' to fight against intrusion by the police and agents of the estates. The famous Battle of the Braes, in which crofters fought with police and the agents of the Sheriff of Inverness-shire, occurred in Skye in 1882, and set the tone of the next few years. In 1886, the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act was passed, and gave crofters security of tenure.



Carragh-cuimhne nan
Imreach – Bunillidh.
Emigrants Statue, Helmsdale.

Dol sios is ath-bheothachadh 1900-2000

Thàinig dùblain eile gu Gàidhealtachd is Eileanan Alba anns an fhicheadamh inn, gu sonraichte a' Chiad agus an Dàrna Cogadh. An déidh Bliadhna Theàrlaich, thug cuid mhath de na Gàidheil an dilseachd do Chrùn Bhreatainn agus don impireachd, agus bha iad gu math toileach èirigh nuair a bhiodh cogadh air èigheach. Chaidh iomadh beatha a chall ann an 1914-18, agus dh'fhàg na thachair aig a' Somme, Arras agus Vimy Ridge làrach air cha mhòr a h-uile dachaigh anns a' Ghàidhealtachd. Ann an 1939-45, chaidh ionadan airson dìon chabhlaichean a thogail air a' Ghàidhealtachd, a bharrachd air na rinn na Gàidheil fhèin anns na réiseamaidean. Chuir an dà chogadh bacadh gu ire air iomairtean às leth na Gàidhlig, ach rinneadh deagh obair gu bhith ga neartachadh le buidhnean mar An Comunn Gàidhealach (a chaidh a chur air chois ann an 1891) agus le buidhnean ùra litreachais is sgilearachd anns na bliadhna eadar an dà chogadh. An déidh 1945, rinneadh oidhrip làdir airson a' Ghàidhlig a dhòn, agus fhuair i inbhe a bha gu math na b' fhollaische ann an càrsaichean oilthighcean is cholaislean, agus anns na sgoiltean. Thugadh deagh bhunait do litreachas na Gàidhlig ann an 1952 nuair a chaidh an iris, Gairm, a stèidheachadh ann an Glaschu. Mhair Gairm gu 2002. Chaidh Comann nan Leabhrachean a chur air chois ann an 1968 airson taic airgid a thoirt do sgrìobhadh na Gàidhlig. Chaidh Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) a stèidheachadh ann an 1984, agus an déidh sin rinneadh strì mhòr bhuadhdmhor airson foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a chruthachadh airson na cloinne, an toiseach ann an Glaschu, Inbhir Nis is Dùn Eideann. Thoïsich colaisce Gàidhlig, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, ann an 1983, agus chuir seo gu mòr ris na h-oidhreachan bha na roinnean Ceiltis is Gàidhlig a' déanamh.

Decline and revival 1900-2000

The twentieth century brought new challenges to the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands of Scotland, principally the First and Second World Wars. After the 'Forty-five Rebellion, many Highlanders became loyal supporters of the British crown and empire, and joined the colours gladly when required. Many lives were lost in 1914-18, and few Highland homes were untouched by the consequences of the battles of the Somme, Arras and Vimy Ridge. In 1939-45, the Highlands and Islands provided important bases for convoy protection, in addition to their contribution to the British regiments. Gaelic initiatives were, to some extent, slowed by both wars, but good work was done to maintain the language by such bodies as An Comunn Gàidhealach (founded in 1891) and by new literary and scholarly groups formed in the inter-war years. From the late 1940s, strenuous efforts were made to prevent the further erosion of Gaelic, and the language gained a stronger place on the syllabuses of universities and colleges, as well as in the schools. The establishment of the Gaelic magazine, Gairm, in Glasgow in 1952 placed Gaelic literature on strong footing. Gairm continued until 2002. The Gaelic Books Council was formed in 1968, to support Gaelic writing with financial incentives. Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) was established in 1984, and this was followed by a highly productive campaign to develop Gaelic-medium education for children, initially in Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh. A Gaelic college, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, began its work in 1983, thus supplementing the efforts of the Celtic and Gaelic department of Scottish universities.

A' cumail taic ris a' chuibhill 2000-2009

Ghabh dealbhachadh na Gàidhlig, agus co-òrdanachadh airson cumail is leasachadh na càinain, ceum mòr ann an 2003, nuair a chaidh Bòrd na Gàidhlig a stèidheachadh, le priomh oifis ann an Inbhir Nis. Tha am Bòrd air Plana Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig fhoillseachadh, agus feumaidh buidhnean poblach Planaichean Gàidhlig a dhealbh, le stiùireadh bhon Bhòrd. Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig a' toirt taic do dh'iomairean Gàidhlig de dh'iomadh seòrsa, agus tha e a-nise gu math nas phasa do na Gàidheil maoineachadh fhaighinn bhon riaghaltas airson pròiseactan sònraichte. Ann an 2005, rinneadh Achd na Gàidhlig (Alba) na lagh, agus tha seo a' toirt 'urram co-ionnan' don Ghàidhlig 's don Bheurla ann an Albainn. Ged a tha àireamh luchd-labhairt dùthchasach na Gàidhlig air crionadh gu mòr anns an dà cheud bliadhna a chaidh seachad, tha üidh mhòr aig luchd-ionnsachaidh anns a' chànan. Tha cothroman ùra airson ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig gan tairgsinn chan ann a-mhàin le colaistean is oilthighean 'traidiseanta' ann an Albainn, ach le Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd 's nan Eilean, a tha a-nise a' teannadh air inbhe oifigeil a bhuanachadh.

Maintaining momentum 2000-2009

Planning for Gaelic, with the creation of a consolidated strategy for language maintenance and development, took a major step forward with the creation of Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2003. Based in Inverness, Bòrd na Gàidhlig has published a National Gaelic Plan, and public bodies are now required to produce Gaelic Plans, with guidance from the Bòrd. Bòrd na Gàidhlig supports Gaelic initiatives of many different kinds, and has made it easier for Gaels to access government funding for specific projects. In 2005 the Scottish Parliament passed the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act, which gives Gaelic a basis of 'equal respect' with English in Scotland. Although the native-speaking core of the Gaelic population has declined sharply over the last two centuries, there is a strong interest in the language among learner groups, with new opportunities for acquisition being provided not only by the 'traditional' Scottish colleges and universities, but also by the emergent University of the Highlands and Islands.



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The Gaels and Gaelic in Scotland

Geàrr-eachdraidh nan Gàidheal
agus na Gàidhlig ann an Albainn

Mini-history of Gaels and
Gaelic in Scotland



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