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Electric Scotland's Weekly Newsletter for June 28th, 2024

Electric Scotland News

I have found a number of issues of the Beaver Magazine which were published by the Hudson's Bay Company. I first discovered this publication several years ago but could only find two copies to add to the site. I later discovered an archive of them but in my view the text was too small to make them easy reading. So now I have discovered this new source I intend to add issues on a regular basis as they represent excellent historical content.

I've added two issues this week and you'll find links to them in our ElectricCanadian section of this newsletter.

Wishing out Canadian friends a Happy Canada Day on July 1st and our American friends a Happy July 4th.

Scottish News from this weeks newspapers

I am partly doing this to build an archive of modern news from and about Scotland and world news stories that can affect Scotland and as all the newsletters are archived and also indexed on search engines it becomes a good resource. I might also add that in a number of newspapers you will find many comments which can be just as interesting as the news story itself and of course you can also add your own comments if you wish which I do myself from time to time.

Here is what caught my eye this week...

Edinburgh's best restaurants you need to try crowned by Time Out
The 34 restaurants in Edinburgh that you need to try have been named by travel magazine Time Out, with the number one spot being an understated neighbourhood eatery with a killer menu.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/scotland-now/edinburghs-best-restaurants-you-need-33061082>

A European surge to the right. What next for the UK?

PRESIDENT MACRON of France got a shock when Marine Le Pen's ultra-right wing National Rally Party won 32% of the vote in the EU elections from 7-9 June, more than double the vote for his own liberal Renaissance Party

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2024/06/23167/>

Teenager sets new world record for caber tossing

Andrew Murphie, 18, managed to toss 23 wooden poles within three minutes, smashing the previous record.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx000wp5340o>

Stuttgart locals thank Tartan Army for brightening up summer' in Germany
Hungary beat Scotland 1-0 in Sunday's match at the Stuttgart Arena.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/stuttgart-locals-thank-tartan-army-33097673>

The party before the mourning after as we go inside celebrity Tartan Army knees-up
Before the disappointment of Scotland's Euro 2024 defeat to Germany, the rich and the famous raised the roof in Munich at a charity fundraiser and emulated the legendary World Cup celebrations in Paris back in 1998.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/tartan-army-party-germany-celebrity/>

How the Canadian Liberals lost the safest seat imaginable, and what happens next
Toronto-St. Paul's had been a Liberal seat for more than 30 years. Not anymore. In the early hours of Tuesday morning, the Conservative candidate pulled off the upset and sent shockwaves through both parties, and the public. How did they do it?

Watch this at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F86ZhQbqmk>

Order of Canada Appointees June 2024

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, announced 83 new appointments to the Order of Canada, including one Companion, 16 Officers, two Honorary Officers and 64 Members. Two appointments are promotions within the Order.

Read more at:

<https://www.gg.ca/en/media/news/2024/order-canada-june>

What are the risks of Trump's second term plans?

WITHIN 6 HOURS of his conviction on 34 counts of falsifying business records to cover up a hush money payment to a porn star, Donald Trump's campaign had raised another \$35 million in donations, and he was soaring in the polls.

Read more at:

<https://thinkscotland.org/2024/06/what-are-the-risks-of-trumps-plans-for-the-presidency/>

Census reveals Scotland's LGBT numbers for first time

Almost 184,000 people in Scotland identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, census data has revealed for the first time.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgllkzjpl59o>

Edinburgh Airport hopes for take-off with new owner

Edinburgh Airport is taking off on a new route as it comes under the control of a French company that claims to be the largest private airport operator in the world. The new owner, Vinci, is backing an airport business that has bounced back strongly from the pandemic, expecting to hit record passenger numbers this year, and growing by another third within the next six years.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjw320d861o>

The Scottish village in the Alps where locals wear tartan and speak Gaelic dialect Gurro, in the Piedmont region of Italy, is home to just 300 people with residents believing it has a strong connection to Scotland dating all the way back to 1525.

Read more at:

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/scotland-now/scottish-village-alps-locals-wear-33110665>

New study shows gardening can stave off dementia

A ground-breaking study by Edinburgh University psychologists kept track of hundreds of Scots and their lifestyles across nearly a whole century.

Read more at:

<https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/study-shows-gardening-can-stave-off-dementia/>

The pain of Sinn Fein

How has support for the party fallen so dramatically?

Read more at:

<https://thecritic.co.uk/the-pain-of-sinn-fein/>

Sleepy Saipan witnesses end of Julian Assange legal saga

Julian Assange has landed back home in his native Australia, after a plea deal allowed him to walk free from a London prison.

Read more at:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cxee24pvl94o>

Electric Canadian

Forest Scenes and Incidents in the Wilds of North America

Being a Diary of a Winter's Route from Halifax to the Canadas and during four months residence in the woods on the Borders of Lakes Huron and Simcoe by George Head, Esq.

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/lifestyle/forestscenesinci00head.pdf>

Father La Brosse

Jesuit, priest, missionary, and professor

A short biography which you can read at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/Religion/fatherLaBrosse.htm>

The Beaver Magazine

Published by the Hudson's Bay Company. I added two more issues being Volume 1 issues 4 & 5 toward the foot of the page.

You can read these at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/transport/hudsonbay/index.htm>

Sessional Papers

Volume 18 - Seventh Session of the Twelfth Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, Session 1917 (pdf)

You can read these at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/sessionalpapers1917canada..pdf>

Royal Military College of Canada
Added the 1954 edition

You can read this edition at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/royalmilitarycollege.htm>

Thoughts on a Sunday Morning - the 23rd of June 2024 - Forgiveness
By the Rev. Nola Crewe

You can watch this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.org/forum/communities/rev-nola-crewe/26508-thoughts-on-a-sunday-morning-the-23rd-of-june-2024-forgiveness>

Sketches of Highlanders

With an account of the early arrival in North America; their advancement in agriculture and some of their distinguished military service in the war of 1812, &c., &c. with letters containing useful information for emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland to the British Provinces by R. C. MacDonald, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Castle Tioram Regiment of Highlanders, Prince Edward Island; Chief of the Highland Society of Nova Scotia and Paymaster of the 30th Regiment (1843) (pdf)

You can read this book at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/Scotland/Sketches-of-Highlanders.pdf>

The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs
Added the 1932 edition

You can read this edition at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/annual/index.htm>

Electric Scotland

Observations on Several Parts of Great Britain

Particularly the Highlands of Scotland relative chiefly to picturesque beauty made in the year 1776 By William Gilpin, A. M., Prebendary of Salisbury; and Vicar of Boldre in New Forest, near Lymington in two volumes (second edition) (1792) (pdf) Also including The Life of William Baker with his funeral sermon by the Rev. Mr. Gilpin (1795) (pdf)

You can read both these publications at:

<https://electricscotland.com/lifestyle/Gilpin.htm>

Report by Thomas Tucker

Upon the Settlement of the Revenues of Excise and Customs in Scotland 1656

You can read this at:

<https://electricscotland.com/history/mediaeval/reportbythomastu71tuckuoft.pdf>

History of Ryegate, Vermont

Added a pdf of this book and also another book entitled "The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion" which is mentioned in the book.

You can get to this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/history/ryegate/index.htm>

Papers Relative to the Regalia of Scotland
By William Bell (1829) (pdf)

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/heraldry/papersrelativeto00bell.pdf>

Scottish Performance in the Program for International Student Assessment, 2006–2022
Falling attainment and rising inequality by Lindsay Paterson, Emeritus Professor of Education Policy, University of Edinburgh (2024) (pdf)

You can read this report at:

<https://electricScotland.com/education/paterson-2024-scottish-performance-in-the-programme-for-international-student-assessment-2006-2022-falling-attainment.pdf>

Pigmentation Survey of School Children in Scotland
By James Fowler Tocher, B.Sc., F.I.C. (1908) (pdf)

You can read this survey at:

<https://electricScotland.com/education/pigmentationsurv00tochrch.pdf>

Clan Iver

Added a Chronological Table to the pdf file on Clan Iver.

You can read this at:

<https://electricScotland.com/webclans/m/claniver.pdf>

Lecture by W. Livingston

Author of "Vindication of the Celtic Character", &c., &c., delivered on the evening of Tuesday, 27th March, 1860, in the Protestant Laymen's Hall, 3 Candleriggs at the request of the Scotch Highlanders of Glasgow (1860) (pdf)

You can read this lecture at:

https://electricScotland.com/books/pdf/lecture_00livi.pdf

Sir George Goldie

Founder of Nigeria, a memoir by Dorothy Wellesley, Duchesss of Wellington, with a historical introduction by Stephen Gwynn (1934) (pdf)

You can read about him at:

<https://electricScotland.com/independence/sip/Sir%20George%20Goldie%20Founder%20of%20Nigeria.pdf>

Story

Father Allan MacDonald of Eriskay

John Lorne Campbell of Canna carried out a great deal of research into the life and work of Father Allan

MacDonald. Through various publications he brought the work of Father Allan as a Gaelic scholar, poet and folklorist to the attention of the wider community. In 1954 he published a pamphlet on the life and work of Father Allan (1859 - 1905). The full text of the pamphlet is given below.

BLAIRS AND VALLADOLID

FATHER ALLAN MCDONALD was born in 1859 at Fort William in Lochaber, which is in the heart of the Scottish Highlands. He belonged to the Keppoch branch of the Macdonald Clan. He gave signs of a vocation in early youth, and entered Blairs College in Aberdeenshire in 1871. Blairs College in those days was run on very Spartan lines, with plain living, stern discipline and hard work, and Fr Allan was heard to say in later life that the training he received there had the great advantage of making any hardships connected with parochial work in the Hebrides seem luxurious by comparison. At Blairs one of Fr Allan's teachers was Fr James A. Smith, later to be Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, who noted early the abilities of his young pupil and encouraged in him an interest in philology and languages which Fr Allan kept up throughout his life. In those days there was no formal teaching of Gaelic at Blairs: Gaelic-speaking boys were given Fr MacEachen's Gaelic Dictionary and a copy of the translation of *Imitatio Christi* and encouraged to pursue the study of Gaelic in their spare time, such as it was. This was less training than might be desired, but at the same time the education given in the study of Latin and Greek trained their minds to undertake the study of their own language, and many priests educated in this way, like Fr Allan, learned Gaelic well and used it effectively.

From Blairs Fr Allan went to the venerable Scots College at Valladolid in Spain, where he continued and completed his studies in an atmosphere that to him was more congenial than that of Blairs. The main influence on Fr Allan's life at Valladolid was that of the Rector, Monsignor David Macdonald, a man remarkable for piety and learning, who spent nearly forty years of his life at the College and improved it greatly. At Valladolid there were several Highland students and they used to produce a holograph Gaelic magazine, of which at least one copy has been preserved. Fr Allan contributed to this, apparently under several different pseudonyms, for his handwriting appears frequently in the surviving copy. Fr Allan later wrote of Valladolid

Thug sinn greis le chéile 'sa Spàinte,
Aite nach bu ghann ar sòlas,
'S bhuain sinn an dearcag fhiona,
'S chaisg sinn ar miann le h.-ubhlan òrbhuidh;
'S chan-eil teagamh nach do dh'fhàs sinn
An geurad inntinn mar bu chòir dhuinn."

"We spent a while together in Spain, a place where our happiness was not little; we picked grapes and ate our fill of oranges, and, no doubt, we grew in keenness of mind as we should have done."

The friend to whom he refers here was Fr John Mackintosh who was later priest of Bornish in South Uist, near Fr Allan, and was famed for his efforts on behalf of the Uist crofters during the days of the land agitation. He was known locally as "Sagart Már nan Each".

OBAN

In 1882 Fr Allan returned from Spain and was ordained at Glasgow Cathedral by Archbishop Eyre. He was offered a teaching post at Blairs, which he refused: and he was then appointed by Bishop Angus Macdonald to the mission at Oban, where he had to minister to a widely scattered population. Here a warm respect and regard grew between Fr Allan and his Bishop, a Gaelic-speaking Highlander like himself, and here and in the countryside around Oban Fr Allan got full opportunity for practising his Gaelic. The only Catholic family then living in the town of Oban itself was that of Donald McLeod, a native of the Isle of Eigg, and from Donald McLeod Fr Allan recovered traditional hymns, some of which were later printed in the hymn book he published in 1893. This was the beginning of an interest in oral tradition to which Fr Allan applied his energies in his spare time for the next seventeen years, taking down the traditional Gaelic oral lore, prayers, hymns, songs, stories, place names, customs and history, whenever he got the chance.

DALIBROG

In 1884 Fr Allan was appointed to the mission of Dalibrog in South Uist, then the most populous, as well as the poorest, island in the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles. Dalibrog in those days could only be reached by steamer from Oban or Glasgow - a full day's sail in the first case. Here Fr Allan landed in July 1884. His congregation was one living on the very margin of existence. Nearly all the best land in the island had been taken, within the preceding three generations, for big sheep farms, and the people had either been evicted or forced, in many cases, to occupy miserable holdings near the shore with a view to pursuing the kelp or fishing industries, the first of which had long ago failed, while very few of them had enough capital to pursue the fishing. The then owner of South Uist, Lady Gordon Cathcart, was an absentee who is said to have visited the island only once in her life. She was obsessed with the idea that the only way the people could benefit themselves was by emigration, and with that idea fixed in her mind she was very unwilling to spend money on improving conditions in South Uist, feeling that anything she did in that line would have the effect of encouraging the people to stay there, which she did not want them to do.

In her absence the island was, like other such estates, ruled by a tight little oligarchy, composed of her factor or agent, the large farmers, and the parish minister. In bodies connected with local government, the representatives of the Catholics, who formed about 80 per cent. of the population, were carefully kept in the minority. This did not prevent friendly relations between individuals in many cases, and it is much to the credit of South Uist that at the height of the land controversy, when very strong feelings were aroused on both sides, no violent actions took place.

When Fr Allan arrived in South Uist, this controversy was at its strongest. The Crofters' Commission had visited many places in the Hebrides, including South Uist, during the preceding year, and had taken much evidence on rack-renting, evictions, oppressive estate managements, obligatory sale or barter, inadequate small-holdings, lack of medical services, and so on. Conditions in Uist, where Fr John Mackintosh had made a strong statement to the Commission on behalf of the crofters, were particularly bad. Legislation was expected, and did follow two years later. Meanwhile the people still had no security of tenure, and without it were terrified of taking an independent line, and often even were afraid to support their own representatives in public.

There was also the question of the local schools. South Uist was and is an overwhelmingly Catholic island, but Lady Gordon Cathcart was not a Catholic, and the minority who were running the island and who composed the great majority of the then School and Parochial Boards had systematically refused to select any Catholic teachers for the national schools on the island set up by the Education Act of 1872. Not until 1888 did the Catholic majority in South Uist obtain its rightful representation on the local School Board. In both the land question and the schools question, Fr Allan and his fellow priests had to explain to a Gaelic-speaking population what its rights were, and had to encourage them to overcome fear of eviction and habitual diffidence and to make a stand and demand these rights - which in practice often meant voting against the factor or the big farmers at Parochial or School Board elections - while on the other hand they had to explain to a not always understanding or sympathetic outside world the position and point of view of a Gaelic-speaking Catholic peasant population. It was a difficult task which often demanded heroic patience, tact, and self-restraint, yet Fr Allan carried it out so well that in South Uist his memory is to-day as warmly regarded by Protestants as it is by Catholics.

In spiritual matters there were equally great difficulties to be overcome. The present generation, even in the Isles themselves, can hardly visualise the difficulties involved in the work of a priest in the days before the coming of the motor car, motor boat, the telephone and the telegraph. Fr Allan's parish, about forty square miles, is completely exposed to the wild storms which sweep across the Atlantic:

Sìde chorrach ghruamach,
Mar bu dual dhith 'san Fhaoilleach
Sìoban geal nam bruach

'Ga fhuadach feadh an t-saoghail,
Marcan-sìne luaithreach
'Na ruaig thar a' chaolais,
Sgrath is sglìot 'gam fuasgladh
Le luathbheum na gaoithe.

Frasan garbh a tuath
Toirt crathadh air gach stuagh,
Clachan meallain cruaidh
A bheumadh barr nan cluas;
Daoine laithte fuar,
Nach fhaod iad sealltuinn bhuap',
A stigh an oir a' luaith
'Gan caibhleachadh.

"Ceann na beinn' ud shuas
Air a shuaineadh 'san anart,
Bho na mharbhadh leis an fhuachd
Na bha bhuadhannan oirr' an ceangal;
Chaill i gu buileach a tuar,
Thàinig suain a' bhàis 'na caraibh,
'S chan-eil coltas oirre gluasad,
Mur fuasgail am blàths a h-anail."

"Rough, gloomy weather, as is usual in early February; white spindrift off the sandbanks driven everywhere; spray like ashes driven across the Sound; sod and slate loosened by the quick blows of the wind. Fierce squalls from the north shaking every gable, hard hailstones which would cut the top off one's ears, men so chilled with cold that they cannot look outside, huddled indoors at the edge of the ashes. The head of yonder hill above is sheathed in a shroud, since the cold has killed her natural virtues. She has lost her appearance entirely, the sleep of death has come on her, and there is no likelihood of her moving until the warmth of spring unbinds her." (Written on 13th February 1898.)

His parishioners were scattered, some villages being only approached by rough tracks; three hundred or so of his congregation of 2300 lived on the Island of Eriskay, separated from South Uist by half a mile of reef-strewn sea with strong tidal currents. To answer a sick call on Eriskay Fr Allan had to walk six or seven miles, often in the rain, to Eriskay Sound and there make a fire on the shore so that the Eriskay boatmen would know to sail over and fetch him. On one of these crossings he was in danger of being drowned. All the duties which fall on the shoulders of a parish priest in a large, poor, scattered and exposed rural parish were on Fr Allan's shoulders: Sunday work, confessions, instructions, sick calls, the repair of Dalibrog Church, the teaching of the children (in which Fr Allan was particularly interested). The foundation of Dalibrog Hospital, built by the Marquis of Bute, sprang from a suggestion put forward by Fr Allan and Fr Mackintosh.

Fr. Alexander Campbell

When Fr Allan first came to South Uist an old priest, Fr Alexander Campbell, a native of the island, was living in retirement at Dalibrog. Fr Campbell was a mine of information on the traditions of South Uist and it was probably he who interested Fr Allan in them. At any rate from 1887 on, once he was settled in and had mastered the local Gaelic dialect, Fr Allan kept a series of note-books in which he jotted down whatever of interest he heard and had time to record, for instance, when spending nights away from home after sick calls to remote places. In 1889 he printed a little book containing the words of the sung Gaelic Mass, part of which he recovered traditionally and part of which he seems to have translated himself. In 1893 this was reprinted with the addition of many Gaelic hymns. Some of these were composed by known writers who lived before Fr Allan, some were traditional, and others again appear to be his own work or his translations from Latin or English. He

was quick to see the immense interest, both religious and secular, of the vast but sometimes ignorantly despised Gaelic oral tradition, of which Uist was then, as it is now, the main storehouse, and his efforts to rescue what he could from the danger of oblivion and to incorporate the traditional religious material into modern devotional literature were worthy of the greatest praise.

Failing health

All his labour, both mental and physical, could have only one effect: within ten years at Dalibrog, Fr Allan had worn out his strength and impaired his constitution. His health broke down: and after a vacation and rest, he was transferred to the Island of Eriskay as its first resident priest. Here he was destined to spend the remaining twelve years of his life, and to have considerably greater opportunity for the pursuit of his literary and folklore researches than hitherto. From some points of view it was unfortunate that at the same time Bishop Angus Macdonald left Oban to become Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh and was followed by a successor who, although a man of holy personality, knew no Gaelic and took little, if any, interest in Fr Allan's work in this field.

Fr. George Rigg

In Dalibrog Fr Allan was succeeded by Fr George Rigg, a most promising young priest who died heroically in the fever epidemic of 1897, having caught the infection while looking after a case - an old woman, one of his parishioners, whose neighbours and relations did not dare to enter the house to help her. This incident affected all Uist deeply, and no one more than Fr Allan, who commemorated Fr Rigg in a touching poem, still unpublished, of which four verses are quoted here:

"Bha am pobull-sa truagh dheth
Féill Moire na Buana,
Gur h-obann a fhuair iad 1èireadh;
Bhuail beum a bha cruaidh iad,
Là dh'eug an sàr-uasal,
Là thrèig an deagh-bhuachail' treud' iad.

"Thu shiubhal nad' òige
Chuir buileach gu bròn sinn,
Am mullach do threòir is t'fheuma;
An sagart glan bòidheach,
Ar taic is ar dòchas,
'Ga fhalach fo'n fhòid, b'e 'm beud e.

"Cha tillte le sgràth thu
Bho shaothair do Shlànair,
Is chite gach là 'nad leum thu
Thoirt sòlas dha'n fhàdraich
'N robh còmhnuidh na plàighe,
Tigh brònach gun bhlàths, gun chéilidh.

"Thu 'd ghaisgeach 'nad ònar,
Gun neach reachadh còmh riut,
Air faiche na tròcair 's feum air
Gun d'fhuair thu trom-leònadh,
'S bàs cruaidh mar bu deòin leat,
'S breith bhuadhach na glòir 'na éirig."

"The congregation was sad for it, on the day of the Assumption (15th August 1897) suddenly they were sorely hurt; a hard blow struck them the day the true noble died, the day the good shepherd of his flock forsook them.

"Your death, in your youth, at the height of your strength and capability, made us all sorrowful; the handsome fine priest, our stay and our hope, concealed beneath the sod, it was a disaster.

"Fear would not deter you from the work of your Saviour, every day you would be seen active; giving consolation to the household where the plague was dwelling, a cold house without warmth or company.

"You were a hero, all alone, without anyone who would go with you on the path of mercy when needed; you were sorely stricken, and earned the martyr's death you desired, and the triumphant judgment of Glory as its recompense."

COLLECTING FOLKLORE

In 1894 a lady, Miss Goodrich Freer, who was enquiring into the survival of belief in second sight on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, visited the Outer Hebrides, and apparently then made Fr Allan's acquaintance. She appreciated the interest of the folklore which he had collected and encouraged him to note down more, which he did until he had filled six quarto note-books with material of this kind, the last four being written between 1893 and 1898. Later on Miss Freer was to publish, under her own name, a good deal of the English part of this material in various lectures and articles and finally in her book on the Outer Isles which appeared in 1902. This free use of Fr Allan's material - his help was acknowledged, but there was nothing to show that he really was the collector - aroused the resentment of Fr Allan's friends, particularly of Alexander Carmichael the folklorist and of George Henderson, lecturer in Gaelic at Glasgow University, 1906-1912. The resulting quarrels must have been deeply painful to a person of Fr Allan's sensitive nature and he did little, if any, work on folklore after 1899 until the summer of 1905, the last year of his life, when no fewer than three ladies, two of them Americans, visited Eriskay in search of folksongs. One of these, Miss Amy Murray, later wrote a book on Fr Allan and his island, and could have collaborated most fruitfully with him had he survived, for she had greater ability in taking down the intricate old Gaelic airs than any other transcriber, but even the collection of 100 airs she made on Eriskay in 1905 is now lost, except for a few published examples.

ERISKAY

The inhabitants of Eriskay, which is a small bare island in the Sound of Barra, about four miles long and two broad, were fishermen, descended from evicted inhabitants of Hellisay and South Uist. The population was, and is, entirely Catholic; being fishermen, they were less affected by the land question: the Estate management did not bother with them (except negatively - it refused to assist the building of a jetty there). Fr Allan loved Eriskay, which was thoroughly congenial to him after the contentious politics of South Uist. He settled down there happily, although always in indifferent health. His best known and first published poem is in praise of the island; but it is an unpublished poem of his on the same subject that I would prefer to quote here:

"Eirisgeidh Mhic Iain 'ic Sheumais
Nan cnoc riabhach 's nam tràigh glègheal
'S ann a gheibhte na fir threuna
Nach gabh gioraig 's muir ag éirigh
Mnathan còire fonnmhor feumail,
Gruagaichean a luaidheas eudach,
Sheinneas binn seach ianlaith géige.
Eilean càirdeil cridheil ceutach,
Chaidh cha chluinnt' ann sgread na Beurla-
Ghàidhlig bhriagh 's i riamh bu bheus dhuinn,
'S trom bha Calum Cille 'n déidh oirr';
Smior na h-uaisle, rìgh na Cléire,
'S math gum foghainn i dhuinn 'na dhéidh-san.
"Eilean ghrinn an fhaithim ghlégheal,
Gilead barr nan stuadh mu t'éideadh;

Gaillinn geamhraidh cha dian beud ort,
'S coltach ri Naomh Eaglais Dé thu,
Creag na dilinn 's i do stéidh-sa.
Gaoth an earraich crainntidh séideadh,
Bian a' chuain le ruinn 'ga reubadh,
Cumaidh Micheil mìn fo sgéith sinn
Saor bho ghàbhadh 's bho chruaidh-éiginn.
"Eilein bhòidhich, làn thu dh'éibhneas,
Leug an domhain thu maduinn Chéitein,
'N driùchd 'na chaorain geala sheudaibh,
Boillsgeadh bristeach 'nad ghorm éideadh,
Dealbh nan reul air cluain nan speuran.

"Eriskay of Mac Iain 'ic Sheumais (a seventeenth century MacDonald hero), of the speckled knolls and the bright white strands; 'tis there one finds strong men who are not afraid when the sea rises, and kindly, tuneful, diligent women who sing more sweetly than the birds on the trees.

"A friendly, kindly, graceful island, where never was heard the screech of English - beautiful Gaelic we always used, greatly loved by St Columba, heart of nobility, king of clerics; and well it sufficed us after his time.

"Beautiful island of whitest strands, the whiteness of the wave tops around thy edge, winter storm cannot hurt thee, thou art like the Holy Church of God, the everlasting rock is thy foundation.

"When the chill wind of springtime blows, and the surface of the ocean is torn by its darts, St Michael will protect us, and preserve us from danger and difficulty.

"Beautiful island, thou art full of happiness, thou are the jewel of the world on a May morning, the dew shining like white diamonds, glittering brokenly on thy green clothing, the picture of the stars on the plain of the heavens."

Fisherman's Mass

Fr Allan obtained special permission from the appropriate department in Rome to say Mass on one of the Eriskay fishing boats every year in the month of May for five years. The fishermen at his request thoroughly cleansed out their boats and gave them the names of Saints. He then gathered them together and blessed them. They cast lots to decide on what boat Mass would be celebrated. An altar with a canopy overhead was erected on the lucky boat, and the others gathered in a circle round it, all gaily festooned and decorated with flags and banners. Some of the flags came from as far away as Hammersmith, others were provided by the fishermen owners. He had the pleasure of celebrating three Masses in this way before his death. One of Fr Allan's first objects was to build a suitable church for his people to replace a wretched thatched building, leaky, seatless, and overcrowded, that had done duty for many years. The people joined eagerly in helping him, giving freely of their own labour in quarrying and dressing stone and procuring sand, and in carrying all the material on their backs to the top of the selected site, Cnoc nan Sgrath, which dominates the western side of the island and has a beautiful view looking southward over the Sound of Barra and northward to South Uist. The Eriskay fishermen themselves offered to devote the proceeds of one night's fishing towards the cost of the church, and after fervent prayer caught a record catch, worth nearly £200, no small sum in those times. Fr Allan himself wrote and circulated a pamphlet on behalf of the new building and this, coupled with his own growing reputation outside Eriskay, led to many subscriptions being received from sympathisers, some not of the Faith, who came generously to aid the project. Fr Allan sold his MSS to his friend the late Walter Blaikie and devoted the money to the same purpose. With this help the church was finished far sooner than expected, and was solemnly opened on 7th May 1903 by the Bishop of the Diocese, and dedicated to St Michael, patron of the Outer Hebrides. It was a day of great rejoicing on Eriskay.

Besides this work Fr Allan laboured incessantly for the good of his island parishioners. Fortified by security of tenure at last achieved through the Crofters Act of 1886, the people began to improve and enlarge their small single-roomed thatched cottages under his encouragement. He pleaded the cause of Eriskay with the Congested Districts Board and got the telegraph extended to the island and a road made there. He exerted his influence, successfully, to keep the Eriskay fishermen from getting into debt, with the result that the fishing there was put on a sound financial footing and survived the crisis of the First World War, which was not the case in every Highland community. He often had to act as medical adviser to his people. He shared their poverty, for at the best his income never exceeded £120, and part of that was earmarked to pay interest on money borrowed to complete the new church there. Throughout his life Fr Allan's character was one of modesty, sincerity and unselfish devotion to duty, and it is not surprising that his memory is revered by everyone in Uist, Barra and Eriskay.

Important collection of Island folklore

His folklore collections, much of which have still to be published, run to hundreds of thousands of words, probably the greatest collection of folklore connected with one definite locality ever made by one person. He enjoyed the friendship and respect of many noted scholars in Scotland and Ireland who did not hesitate to ask him frequently the kind of questions that can only be answered by the man on the spot. He left, amongst other things, a vocabulary of South Uist Gaelic and a short diary in Gaelic, which has been printed in the quarterly magazine *Gairm*, and many original poems.

Fr Allan was not to survive the opening of the new church on Eriskay by many years. In October 1905 he was prostrated by a severe cold. Medical help was not immediately sought - there was only one doctor for the whole of Uist and Eriskay - and this developed into acute pneumonia from which, with his old cardiac trouble, he died. He was only forty-six at the time of his death but he had done more in his lifetime than most who reach the allotted span. In his own words:

"Thig am bàs oirnn nuair nach saoil sinn,
Fear gun eismeal, aois no òige,
Bochd no beairteach ar cor saogh'lta,
Chan-eil saod dol as bho thòrachd.
Bitheamaid 'nar faicill daonnan,
Cha tug Dia dhuinn aont' dhe'n bheatha -
'N am duinn dol gu tàmh na h-oidhche
Chan-eil cinnt gum faic sinn latha.
Ionad-bhàis co e dha'n aithne?
Muigh air aineol no measg chàirdean,
'N e dol sìos an craos na mara,
No bàs leapa bhios an dàn duinn?
"Bàs le d' ghràsan bhith mu m' thimchioll
'S e mo ghlaodh ri Rìgh na Cathrach,
Micheal mìn aig uair mo thriall-sa
Bhith 'gam dhìon bho nimh na nathrach.
"Iosa, na dian mise dhìobairt,
'S daor a dhiol thu air mo cheannach,
Air sgath ùrnaigh Moire mìne,
Thug dhut bainne cìch ad leanabh.
Iosa, Mhoire, agus Ioseiph
Dhuibhse tha mi tairgse m'anam;
Na cur cùl rium, ach dian tròcair,
Tha mo dhòchas 'nad bhàs fala."

"Death comes to us unexpected, independent, young or aged; though our state be poor or wealthy, his pursuit

we cannot evade.

"Let us be watchful always, God has not given us a lease of life ; when we go to rest at night we cannot be sure we will see the day.

"Who can tell his place of dying? away abroad or amongst friends; is it to be engulfed by the waves or a death in bed that is in store for us

"A death with thy graces around me is my cry to the King of Heaven; may St Michael at the hour of my departure protect me from the serpent's poison.

"Jesus, do not Thou refuse me, dearly Thou paid'st to redeem me, for the sake of the prayer of Sweet Mary who nursed Thee when Thou wast a babe.

"Jesus, Mary and Joseph, to you I offer my soul; turn Thou not from me but have mercy, my hope is in Thy crucifixion."

FR ALLAN McDONALD, ERISKAY

R.I.P. 1905

Lone is the Isle where our hero priest slumbers,
Wild are the waves that encompass its shore
Broken the hearts of the faithful it numbers -
Peace to his ashes, Loved Allan's no more."
Cold now the Autumn blasts come from the ocean,
Black now the land that the Reaper hath mown;
Death's cruel hand stills a heart of devotion,
Harvesting angels have made him their own.
His was the hearth where the poor found a corner,
His was the heart that could lighten their cares,
His was the tongue that could silence the scorner,
His were the gifts bringing credit to "Blairs".
Fearless he sailed o'er the tempest-tossed billows,
(Child of the tempest and sea-beaten strand)
Angel of comfort, to smoothen the pillows
Of sick ones departing to God's better land.
Shades of Iona - thy light hath not vanished,
Sainly Columba keeps vigil and guard;
Tyrants thro' envy thy true servants banished
God's "one true Faith" still remained their reward.
"Caritas Christi", O heavenly motto
Taught from the Cross on sad Calvary's hill,
Born 'mid the snowdrifts of Bethlehem's Grotto,
Thank God Love's lesson's in Eriskay still.

DEAN ROGAN

END

Weekend is almost here and hope it's a good one for you.

Alastair