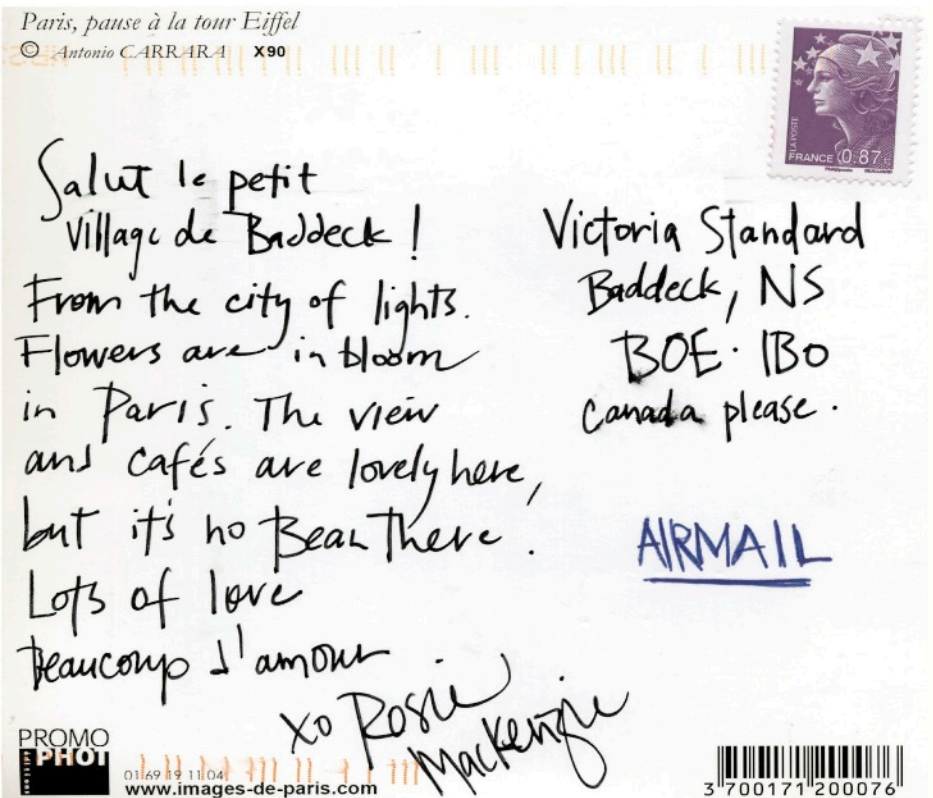


# Postcards from beyond the County lines



Paris, pause à la tour Eiffel  
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## Saoghal na Gàidhlig... The Gaelic way of living in the world

'S ann do Chlainn mhic Amhlaidh ann an Ùig, Eilean Leodhais, a bhuineas Ear-naidh MacAmhlaidh; mar sin 's cinnteach gu bheil Dòmhnall Càrn, saoidh ainmeil na 16mh-17mh linn, a nochdas gu tric ann a' beul-aithris an eilein, 'na shinnsireachd!

Tha Earnaidh a' creidsinn gun d' thàinig a shinn-sinn-seanair Calum gu Pictou ann am meadhan na 18mh linn agus an uair sin gu Ceap Breatainn. Ghluais teaghlach Earnaidh bhon Acarsaid a Tuath gu Halafacs nuair a bha e òg, ach thilleadh e gach samhradh agus chluinneadh e a' Ghàidhlig aig a sheanmhair is aig bràithrean agus peathraichean 'athar.

Tha cuimhne ghaolach aig a' sheanmhair, Norina, a bha 'na Nic Gille Mhoire mas do phòs i Tormod, seanair Earnaidh. Bha 14 duine cloinne aca agus bha a' Ghàidhlig aig a h-uile gin dhiùbh. "Bha anam a b' acaraidh aice-se na aig cha mhòr duine sam bith eile air an robh mi eòlach," canaidh Earnaidh m' a déidhinn. "Bha Baba trang an còmhnaidh ach nuair a bhiodh campar orm-fhìn 's air mo bhràthair a bu shine, chiùnicheadh i sinn le facal coibhneil agus chuireadh i a gàirdeanan mu'n cuairt oirnn. Dhèanadh i rèidh suidheachadh sam bith...."

Tha cuimhn' aig Earnie a bhith a' cuideachadh a sheanmhair le obair timcheall an taighe: "Bha mart agus cearcan aice agus b' e mo dhleasdanas na h-uighean a thrusadh. Bha sgaradair aice a dh' obraicheadh tu le làimh agus dh' ionnsaich i dhomh mar a dhèanainn sgaradh air an uachdar is a' bhainne, rud a bh' agam ri dhèanamh gach là. Bha muidhe fiodh' aice agus sheall i dhomh ciamar a dh' obraichinn e agus air là maistrìdh, ghabhadh sinn turas mu seach ris a' mhaistreadh... Bha molltairean ìme aice le pàtarain air na buinn agus bheireadh i ormsa na molltairean a lionadh leis an ìm air a' mhaistreadh... Bha an tì daonnan deiseil agus dheasaicheadh i tì lag dhomhsa nuair a bha feum agam air faochadh."

Nuair a rachadh a' chlànn a-mach a chluich, bheireadh i rabhadh dhaibh gun a dhol gu domhainn 's a' choille air eagal nam mathan 's nam madaidhean allaidh; 's a bhith cùramach a' cluich le maidean nach cuireadh iad sùil á cuideigin! Nuair a ruigeadh iad an taigh a-rithist 's iad gu math robach, ghlaodhadh i: "Och—salach!"

Bha lios àlainn fhùraichean aig a' sheanmhair agus bhiodh i a' gabhail tlachd anns na ròsan 's an uillinn aice gu sònraichte; uaireannan, bhiodh i a' toirt air Earnie ròsan a thional a chuireadh i air a' bhòrd no anns an t-seòmar-suidhe.

Às déidh dha 20 bliadhna a chur seachad air taobh siar na dùthcha, tha Earnie a-nis air tighinn dhachaidh, e-fhèin 's an teaghlach—agus tha e ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig. Nan cuireamaid car ùr air an t-seanfhacl "An t-ionnsachadh òg, an t-ionnsachadh bòidheach", dh' fhaodadh sinn a ràdh: "An t-ionnsachadh inbhidh, saothair gaol". Nan robh seanmhair Earnaidh beò aig an àm seo, 's cinnteach gun glaothadh i: "Sin thu-fhèin!"

It's to the MacAulays of Uig, Isle of Lewis, that Ernie Macaulay belongs; so his lineage surely includes Domhnall Càrn, a renowned warrior of the 16th-17th centuries, who figures frequently in Lewis lore!

Ernie believes that his great-great-grandfather Calum landed at Pictou in the mid-18th century and then came on to Cape Breton. Ernie's own family moved from the North Gut to Halifax when he was a boy but when he returned each summer, he would hear Gaelic spoken by his grandmother and his father's siblings.

Ernie fondly remembers his grandmother Norina ("Norrie") who was a Morrison before she married his grandfather Norman. They had 14 children, every one of whom had the Gaelic. "She was one of the most gentle souls I knew," Ernie says of her. "Baba was always busy but she was always there to soothe ruffled feathers between me and my older brother, with a kind word and a hug. She was a peacemaker...."

Ernie remembers helping his grandmother with the chores: "She had a cow and chickens and it was my task to collect the eggs. Baba had a hand driven separator and she taught me how to separate the cream from the milk and it became one of the chores that I would do each day. She also had a wooden butter churn that she showed me how to use and I would take turns with her during a day of churning butter. She had wooden butter moulds with patterns on the bottom and she would get me to fill the moulds with the churned butter... There was always tea ready and she would make me a weak cup when I needed a break."

When the children went out to play she would warn them not to go deep into the woods for fear of the bears and wolves and be careful while playing with sticks not to poke someone's eye out! When they returned home all dirty, she would exclaim: "Och—salach!"

Norrie had a beautiful flower garden and loved her roses and honeysuckle, and sometimes she would have Ernie go with her to pick some roses for the table or the sitting room.

After 20 years out west, Ernie is now home, he and his family—and is learning the Gaelic. To put a new twist on an old Gaelic proverb ("Young learning is beautiful learning"), we might say: "Learning in maturity is a labour of love". If she were alive now, Grandmother MacAulay would surely voice her approval.

*The Gaelic Way of Living in the World is written by Catriona Parsons and sponsored by...*



Office of Gaelic Affairs  
Oifis Iomairtean na Gàidhlig

**The Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board**  
will meet at  
**Jubilee Elementary School  
Sydney Mines, Nova Scotia  
Monday, April 18, 2011 at 7:00 pm**  
THE PUBLIC IS CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND  
Anyone wishing to make a presentation should advise the Recording Secretary in writing no later than Monday, April 11, 2011.  
Please Contact George Boudreau at (902) 564-8293 or Fax at (902) 562-6814

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