

“What’s Happening” - from page three

Cape North Farmers Market, United Church Hall, Cape North, claudia.gahlinger@gmail.com

Hike the Highlands Festival, Closing Ceremonies St. John's Hall, Ingonish

Youth Movie Night, Indian Brook Fire Hall 7 pm

Make & Fly a Kite That's Yours to Keep! A G Bell National Historic Site, Baddeck (902) 295-2069

Can water go uphill? Find out in the Experiment Program. AG Bell National Historic Site, Baddeck (902) 295-2069

International Coastal Clean-up Day Bras d’Or Yacht Club 9 am

Biosphere Reserve Bike Ride, North Sydney to Iona 9:30 am - 2 pm

Ride for the Cure, 1,000 motorcycles ride the Cabot Trail to raise funds for cancer research.

Crib Game, Middle River Community Hall, 1:30 pm

Park interpreters out and about along the Cabot Trail, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, (902) 285 3004

Harvest Home, AG Bell National Historic Site, Baddeck (902) 295-2069

Bras d’Or Lakes Biosphere Reserve Celebrations, Highland Village, Iona (902) 725-2272

Flea Market, Little Narrows Community Hall

Debut Atlantic Classical Recital, Chris Donnelly piano, Kornel Wolak, clarinet, Colouratura Gallery, Indian Brook 8:15 pm

Karen and Joey Beaton, Telegraph House, Baddeck (902)-295-1100

Jerome Campbell, Keltic Lodge Resort, Ingonish (902) 285-2880

Sunday, September 18
Baddeck Family Fun Day, Baddeck Board Walk, 1 pm - 4 pm

Open Farm Day, Highland Village, Iona (902) 725-2272

Ross Ferry Biosphere Celebration, Ross Ferry Marine Park 1 pm - 4 pm

Flea Market, Little Narrows Community Hall

Park interpreters out and about along the Cabot Trail, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, (902) 285 3004

Jerome Campbell, Keltic Lodge Resort, Ingonish (902) 285-2880

Terry Fox Run, Baddeck and North River

Monday, September 19
Fran Doyle, Keltic Lodge Resort, Ingonish (902) 285-2880

Karen and Joey Beaton, Telegraph House, Baddeck (902)-295-1100

Tuesday, September 20
Fran Doyle, Keltic Lodge Resort, Ingonish (902) 285-2880

Bingo, North River Community Hall

Wednesday, September 21
Jason MacDonald, Keltic Lodge Resort, Ingonish (902) 285-2880

Baddeck Community Market, Baddeck Community Centre (902) 577-3260

Saoghal na Gàidhlig... The Gaelic way of living in the world

Chuala mi an t-ainm Slios a’ Bhrochain a’ chiad turas còrr is 30 bliadhna air ais. Abair ainm! Dé fo’n ghréin a bha e a’ ciallachadh? Bha fios agam air na bha gach fhacal a’ ciallachadh; ach ’nam dhualchainnt, faodar ‘brochan’ a chur gu feum ann an dòigh a chiallaicheas rudaigin nach eil ro mhath, mar “Rinn e brochan dheth!”

Aig àm eile, leugh mi Eachdraidh Siorra-machd Bhioctoria a rinn MacPhàdraig ’s e ag innse dhuinn gur anns Na Hearadh Nuaidh àit’ air taobh a tuath Caolas a’ Bhraisd’ Or Mhóir; gura b’ e Slios a’ Bhrochain—ged nach eil e ’ga litreachadh ceart—ainm an àite roimhe sin; agus gun d’ thug na tìrichean Albannach ainm na seann dachaigh ac’ air (d. 187).

Chaidh feadhainn dhe na tìrichean sin ‘ainmeachadh ann a’ “Along the shores of Boularderie”, òran ionadail a chruinnich Helen Creighton a chuir séisd is fonn òrain Ghàidhlig gu feum : “Hithillean na hithill i/ Hithillean na hillean o/ Faill-ill eile ’s horo i/ Mo thruaighe mi mur faigh mi thu.” Tha dà cheathramh a’ toirt tarraing air “Sunny slios a’ bhronachain”. Anns a’ bhonn-nòta aice, tha Creighton ag innse dhuinn gur e ‘Slios a’ bhronachain’ àite beag mu choinneimh Bras d’ Or; gun d’ thugadh an t-ainm air seach gu robh na daoine a bha a’ fuireachd ann déidheil air brochan; gur e ‘bhrochain’ an litreachadh ceart; agus gur dòcha gun deach an lide a bharrachd a chur dhan fhacal seach gum freagradh seo dhan cheòl.

Taing do Institiùd Pheutain, fhuair mi cothrom litir a leughadh a sgrìobh Dòmhnall Caimbeul, tìriche Na Hearadh Nuaidhe, air an t-7mh là dhen Dàmhair, 1830, gu ’bhràthair-céile Ùisdean MacAoidh ann an Eilean Leódhais. Anns a’ litir, tha e ’toirt taing do Dhia airson cho toilichte ’s a tha e gun d’ thàinig e dhan dùthaich; gu bheil e suidhichte gu suaibhreach air an fhearann aige fhéin, gun uallaich sam bith; agus gu ’s urrainn dha a bhith a’ falbh ’s a’ tighinn a-rèir a thoil fhéin, gun duine beò a’ toirt air dad a dhèanamh nach robh a-rèir a thoil.

Chan eil Dòmhnall a’ gearan air a’ gheamhradh nas motha: chan eil e cho fuar ’s a chualas; ’s urrainn dhà craobhan a leagail gun chòt’ air; tha an t-side mar is tric tioram is soilleir le reothadh cruaidh. Tha e moladh na dùthcha mar àite math do dhaoine aimbeartach oir thig bàrr air sìol sam bith a chuireas iad; as t-samhradh, tha an t-side ciùin, taitneach—nas blàithe na aig an taigh ann a’ Leódhas.

Ged a tha e ’toirt luaidh air cruadalachd na ciad bliadhna, nuair a bha feum air taic bho ’n Riaghaltas, a-nis tha iad gu math dheth. “’S bochd,” tha e ’sgriobhadh, “nach d’ thàinig thu-fhein còmhla ruinn”; agus tha e ’gealltainn àit’ air an fhearann aige fhéin dha bhràthair-céile “gu sìorraidh” ma’s toil leis tighinn.

Nuair a ghabh mi cuairt bho chionn ghoirid sìos ‘Slios a’ Bhrochain’, stad mi aig Cladh na Hearadh Nuaidhe far an laigh Gàidheil neo-aithnichte agus chunnaic mi leithid nan ainmean seo : MacChoinnich, Moireasdan, MacLeòid, Rothach—agus Alasdair Gunnach, ’s dòcha am fear a bha air ‘ainmeachadh anns an òran gu h-àrd? Ach anns a’ litir aig Dòmhnall Caimbeul, nach deach a chur air falbh a-riamh, a-rèir choltais, gheobh sinn seallagan a-staigh dhan bheatha a bh’ aig na Gàidheil anns Na Hearadh Nuaidh ann a’ ciad leth na 19mh linn—agus b’ ann ac’ a bha an deagh bheatha.

‘Slios a’ Bhrochain’ was a name I first heard more than thirty years ago. My reaction was: What kind of name was that? What on earth did it mean? I knew ‘slios’ meant ‘side, flank, edge’ and ‘brochan’ could be used for ‘porridge’, although in my dialect it was often used in a way to suggest something not so good, as in “Rinn e brochan dheth!” (‘He made a mess of it!’)

Later I read Patterson’s History of Victoria County which states: “New Harris is a settlement on the north side of Gt. Bras d’ Or Strait. It was formerly known as ‘Slois a Bhrochan’ (sic).....The Scottish settlers changed the name to New Harris after their home in Scotland” (p. 187).

Some of these settlers are named in “Along the shores of Boularderie”, a local song collected by Helen Creighton, with Gaelic chorus and tune: “Hithillean na hithill i/ Hithillean na hillean o/ Faill-ill eile ’s horo i/ Mo thruaighe mi mur faigh mi thu.” Two verses refer to “Sunny slios a’ bhronachain”. Creighton adds an explanatory note: “This old world chorus is very popular with new world verses. The last line means: sad am I indeed if I do not get thee. ‘Slios a’ bhronachain’ is a little place opposite Bras d’ Or where they were given this name because of their fondness for gruel. The name means Gruel Side. ‘Bhrochain’ is the proper spelling: the extra syllable was probably added to fit the music.”

Thanks to the Beaton Institute, I was able to read a letter dated October 7, 1830, that settler Donald Campbell of New Harris wrote in English to his brother-in-law Hugh MacKay back on the Island of Lewis: “Thank God I am well pleased for coming to this country as I find myself quite easy, having occupied land called my own free from all burdens whatsoever. I go out and in at my pleasure, no soul living forces me to do a turn against my will.....”

Nor does Donald complain about winter conditions which he says are “not quite so cold as represented....I can work in the wood felling trees without my coat on, the weather is almost always dry and clear with hard frost....This country is good for poor people, produces good crops of potatoes, oats, wheat, barley and anything you think proper to sow or plant—in summer the weather is mild and pleasant, the climate more warm than with you at home....”

He does mention the hardships during the first year and “want of provisions for our support, but we had some help from Government, but now we are well off...It is a great pity you did not come along with me...” He exhorts his brother-in-law to consider coming: “Should you come I will give you a house and part of what I possess till you find a place....or should you stop upon my land forever you are quite welcome...”

Recently, I made a trip down ‘Slios a’ Bhrochain’, visiting the New Harris Cemetery where lie unknown Gaels with names like MacKenzie, Morrison, MacLeod, Munroe—and an Alexander Gunn, perhaps the ‘Sandy Gunn’ mentioned in the above song? But from Donald Campbell’s letter, apparently never sent, we catch a glimpse of life in New Harris in the first half of the 19th century—and it was good.

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





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