



INTERPRETATION

Appendix E - The use of Gaelic within Interpretation at Applecross



Background to this document

In April 2011 Interpretation was commissioned to undertake the development of a 'community interpretive plan' with the community of Applecross. Extensive community consultation took place, both face to face and via surveys and a wide range of views was taken into consideration.

A first draft interpretive plan was circulated in June 2011 inviting stakeholders to feed back on its content. One shortcoming in this first draft was a lack of clear focus on the role of Gaelic within interpretation. This Appendix (along with changes to the final plan) correct this.

Gaelic is present in almost every local placename but as some still speak it, it is also a living language within the peninsula, rather than one to be considered solely in connection with Applecross history. It must therefore be considered within interpretive planning.

The role of the Bealach Group within interpretation

The Bealach Group was founded eight years ago to promote Gaelic and create opportunity for learners. Some of its aims coincide with those of the local Historical Society (which founded the Heritage Centre). In the past, the Bealach Group has run Gaelic classes in the summer and winter and an annual Feis event, and also supports the local Gaelic after-school club held in the Community Hall.

With support from ALPS the Bealach Group also ran a successful Bardic School in 2011, a themed celebration of Gaelic language. This is a major undertaking that drew 20 people to Applecross for an intensive Gaelic cultural experience. In the past, the Bealach Group has also produced an Applecross DVD as part of the Highland 2007 year.

Like the Heritage Centre, the Bealach Group is attempting to extend its outreach within the community, so that more people are encouraged towards its activities. Future Bardic Schools if held would benefit from a strong and interpretive local theme, giving additional reasons for would-be participants to come to Applecross. The Bealach Group can also contribute to interpretation within the peninsula as a whole, notably by providing accurate local Gaelic advice and translation where needed.

A starting point for this 'new links' approach could be to provide a laminated A4 sheet about Applecross Gaelic for every restaurant table in Applecross at the beginning of every season. This could cover the work of the Bealach Group, promote specific Gaelic-linked activities planned by the Bealach group and provide background information to key local Gaelic placenames, hill names, colours and local phrases, with translations and phonetic versions for people to try.

At the very least this would provide entertainment for the visitor - but in a number of cases it could just be the first seed of more interest in Bealach Group activities. The aim should be to transform a first time one-day visitor into someone who visits Applecross more thoroughly and who may, in some cases, consider learning Gaelic there.

Applecross Gaelic

Gaelic varies from island to island and from community to community. Applecross Gaelic has its own distinct dialect and vocabulary. Its own placename is an Anglicisation of the Pictish Aber Crosan, the mouth of the River Crosan. Its alternative name is A'Chomraich, meaning the sanctuary in Gaelic. Where possible, translation and audio downloads should be recorded by people with that local dialect and vocabulary.

Gaelic and interpretive media

Every form of interpretive media selected by the local community should pass through a stage which takes into consideration the 'sound and shape' of Gaelic, including: leaflets, information sheets, multimedia/website content and downloads, interpretive benches, walk names.

While it will not always be practicable to have a full bilingual version of every media option (for example a bilingual Scenic Walks leaflet would double its current two-sided A3 size, making it unwieldy to open and use), it is still desirable to include Gaelic within interpretation imaginatively where possible. In some instances separate Gaelic and English information may be desirable

- The written word

It is not necessary or indeed advisable for all interpretation to start with English with and translated into English. In some cases it may be appropriate to start with Gaelic and be translated into English. Gaelic placenames, poetry, words and phrases can be translated into English, some rendered phonetically to encourage speaking the language. Key placenames include A'Chomraich itself and Loch a'Mhuilinn, each giving an initial insight into the attractive sounds produced by unusual combinations of consonant in Gaelic to a non-Speaker ear.

Gateway signage to the peninsula should be in both Gaelic and English.

A relevant and beautiful line of local and appropriate poetry (chosen by the Bealach Group) carved into stone on interpretive benches (as well as existing recommendations for minimal interpretation there) would be appropriate and attractive.

- The spoken word

The aim of interpretation should be to encourage anyone engaging with it to try the sound of Gaelic in their own mouth. This often comes as a surprise to non-Speakers who have struggled to decipher a written Gaelic phrase. Opportunities created through interpretation to encourage the speaking of Gaelic, where appropriate, should be taken.

Website downloads, for example, could include a section linking to the Heritage Centre's placenames plan, offering recordings of local people – especially local children – speaking the placenames and giving a translation of them too while a written version appears on screen. The Historical Society is already investigating this but recognises that it requires a good deal more exploration. Notably it would welcome an alternative website to that of the Heritage Centre website for hosting 'learning resources'.

This would allow both visitors and more recent arrivals within the local community to hear the place names said and understand what they mean. For many, this could be the first step in a desire to learn more Gaelic. Colours and hill shape-names play a vivid part in Gaelic placenames and helping people learn those could be a first step in a desire to know more. This would be a great project for anyone with multi-media skills within the local community.

It would also be possible to have some local Gaelic stories and poetry recorded by the Bealach Group, possibly during the Bardic School, and downloadable. It makes sense for any audio-recording activity within Applecross to be co-ordinated by the Heritage Centre and/or the Bealach Group.

People within the community who speak Gaelic could also be recorded giving their 'Applecross view' in Gaelic, repeating it in English.

- Promotion of Gaelic via interpretation

As has been stated in the plan, interpretation is not marketing. It can however nudge visitors who engage with it towards certain objectives: learning, emotional, behavioural and locational. The following objectives specific to Gaelic could be considered within interpretive planning:

Objectives for Gaelic within interpretation at Applecross	<i>Families & Children</i>	<i>Those who wish to stay longer or return</i>	<i>Those who do not visit in a way which benefits Applecross</i>	<i>Those for whom Applecross already has a meaning, who want to understand it better</i>
<i>Learning</i>	Encourage families & children to speak Gaelic through 'virtual' and some on-site interpretation, and restaurant table info sheets	Encourage those who come back to consider an 'introduction to Gaelic for visitors' day course as part of their extended or next stay	Use Gaelic on site to enhance the subliminal sense of 'specialness' about particular places – the head of Applecross Bay for example	Encourage this market to return for a week-long 'Beginner's Gaelic' crash course, or if Speakers, to register for a future Bardic School
<i>Media</i>	<i>Website content & downloads, info sheets, path names</i>	<i>Restaurant table info sheets, Bealach events info on website</i>	<i>Interpretive benches,</i>	<i>Restaurant table info sheets, Bealach events info on website</i>

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<i>Emotional</i>	Families and children should leave Applecross regretting the loss of Gaelic across the Highlands and proud they can say a few words in it	Ensure that interpretation has a Gaelic flavour which will be remembered as part and parcel of a wonderful holiday	Sadly, unlikely to appeal emotionally to this audience?	Encourage engagement with Gaelic by presenting it as a living language through 'virtual' interpretation: mix academic Gaelic with everyday views and provide translation of Gaelic into English by the same speaker
<i>Media</i>	<i>Restaurant table info sheets, website content & downloads</i>	<i>Bealach interpretation</i>	-	<i>Gaelic downloads from an appropriate website, both academic and local views</i>

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<i>Behavioural</i>	Encourage families and children not to feel self-conscious about trying a few words of Gaelic	Encourage those returning to find out more about Gaelic in Applecross online before they come	Encourage a curiosity towards Gaelic which might lead further	Encourage those who have enjoyed participation in the Bardic schools to leave positive feedback online in both Gaelic and English for others to read
<i>Media</i>	<i>Restaurant table info sheets, Scenic Walks leaflet</i>	<i>Applecross info online</i>	<i>Restaurant table info sheets</i>	<i>Applecross info online</i>

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Locational	Encourage families and children to walk in the peninsula and learn the names of the colours within the placenames	Encourage those returning to walk and pronounce the path name they have chosen, perhaps exploring its meaning too	Discourage anti-social activity in for example the Head of the Bay area by using Gaelic within interpretation to enhance its 'specialness'	Encourage participants with sufficiently good Gaelic attending the Bardic Schools to compose Gaelic poetry about particular themes or places within Applecross which can be used in future interpretation
Media	<i>Scenic Walks leaflet</i>	<i>Scenic Walks leaflet, path downloads from website</i>	<i>Interpretive benches where appropriate</i>	<i>Applecross info online</i>