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The New Zealand Gaidhealtachd  
Sealain Nuadh Gaidhealtachd

The Uses of History in the Creating and Sustaining  
of a Culturally Based Community

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Masters of Arts at Massey University

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*Le deagh dhurachd,  
slainte agus sonas agus beatas.*



## Map and Photographs

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## Glossary of P-Gaelic and Q-Gaelic Words

<i>Braighe</i>	The upper part (of places).
<i>Ceilidh</i>	Evening of dance, music, song and storytelling.
<i>Cunamara</i>	Hound of the sea
<i>Curragh</i>	Small traditional Irish boat.
<i>Feis</i>	Literally translated as feast or banquet but commonly understood as celebration.
<i>Hiraeth</i>	Longing or nostalgia, and being indivisible from the land (Welsh).
<i>Ionndrain</i>	A sense of loss/longing which comes from the removal from ancestral land (Irish).
<i>Steidh</i>	Theme

## Introduction

*Natives have often wished that white people would study their own ancestors.*<sup>1</sup>

The topic of this thesis is the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School which takes place every year between the 2nd - 7th of January at Whangarei Heads School in Northland. The word Gaidhealtachd refers to a Gaelic speaking area (specifically of Scotland and Ireland), and is generally understood as the area where traditional ways survive and are valued. The objectives of the Gaidhealtachd, as outlined in the *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet produced in its tenth year, are that: 'The Gaidhealtachd seeks to promote an awareness of the cultural debt we owe to our Celtic ancestors, and to provide opportunities to explore Celtic arts, languages, values and traditions'.<sup>2</sup> The booklet also describes the Gaidhealtachd as being specifically for those 'who identify themselves as Celts of good will, who want to explore their own and related Celtic cultures in the spirit of rediscovery and redirection made possible in the unique context of New Zealand-Aotearoa'.<sup>3</sup> The Gaidhealtachd has recently become a trust and has conducted a Celtic Studies Summer School annually for the last seventeen years. The Gaidhealtachd is an interesting topic for study because, while there are many Scots, Irish, and Welsh clubs and organisations in New Zealand, research has revealed that the Gaidhealtachd is probably the only group which encompasses all the individual Celtic cultural identities in an educational context. The choice of venue for the Summer School provides a further point of interest in that Whangarei Heads School, founded in 1857 or 1858, is the oldest continuously operated settler school in New Zealand. The school was established by members of the Gaelic speaking Nova Scotian Scots of Waipu who settled at Whangarei Heads in 1856. Whangarei Heads School has been the venue for the Gaidhealtachd for the last seventeen years, principally because of its historical significance as the oldest continuously operated settler school in New Zealand, and also because of its Gaelic speaking origins. It will be argued here that the history of the area of Whangarei Heads area generally, as well as that of the school, has had considerable influence over the development of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School and that knowledge of the first settler community has become a

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<sup>1</sup> Kame'elihiwa, in R. Borofsky, 'Cook, Lono, Obeyeskere and Sahlins', *Current Anthropology*, 38, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, 1999.

touchstone for participants understanding of history in general and also in how it is interpreted on a personal level. This thesis will therefore consider the way history itself is used - in the history of the Scots from Nova Scotia, in the understanding of the Gaelic language as spoken by the settlers at Whangarei Heads and by the pupils of Whangarei Heads School, in the creation of a community based on a Celtic ethos, and in the significance and perceived wider understanding of the history of the Celtic peoples. As the leader of the Scottish Nova Scotian community who settled at Waipu and founded other communities such as Whangarei Heads, the role of the Reverend Norman McLeod as reference point will be discussed and it will be argued that there is significantly less emphasis placed on his part in the development of the Whangarei Heads community than that of Waipu.

This study of the Gaidhealtachd will consider several themes. It will be demonstrated that the Gaidhealtachd is a case study of the transmission and adaptation of ideas in that, while the concept of the Gaidhealtachd is part of the world-wide movement of the Celtic revival, the notion of Celtic identity which developed in Britain is different from that experienced by the people of the Gaidhealtachd. Although the Gaidhealtachd has only been held for seventeen years it pre-dates many of the similar *Feis*<sup>4</sup> now held in Scotland and other parts of the world. It also differs from these events in that it identifies with, and celebrates the culture of, all of the individual Celtic peoples. The establishment of the Gaidhealtachd was influenced considerably by both the history of the Whangarei Heads area and also by events in Nova Scotia and therefore concepts which locate what happens in New Zealand within a global context will be discussed where they are applicable. A study of the Gaidhealtachd Summer School fits alongside recent research on the British world in which historians have used concepts such as diaspora, culture and identity in order to analyse the make-up and dynamics of the imperial British enterprise - 'the expansion of Britain and the peopling and building of the trans-oceanic British world'.<sup>5</sup> It will be argued that events in New Zealand are not isolated but part of a wider pattern within the British world - the British world being a term used during the first half of the twentieth century by those of common British

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<sup>4</sup> Literally translated as feast or banquet but commonly understood as celebration.

<sup>5</sup> C. Bridge, & K. Fedorowich, (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p.11.

ancestry, culture and identity.<sup>6</sup> Jock Phillips says that there is in the writing of New Zealand history a need for a cultural history which can 'recover in loving detail the diversity of cultures that once settled here, and the process whereby those diverse cultures were given a New Zealand context'.<sup>7</sup> It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to 'recover' the history of New Zealanders of Celtic ancestry for they are a disparate group and moreover much of the early history of New Zealand immigration is unrecorded due to incomplete record keeping. However, by the accessing and understanding of the lived experience of a group of individuals - to give agency to particular lives rather than an understanding of history based on larger themes, what *is* possible, is an exploration of how one group of New Zealanders has sought to create and sustain their own cultural community based on their understanding of what it is to be Celtic in New Zealand. The understanding of the history of the Gaidhealtachd community could be linked and connected to other stories as part of a textual web representative of the society in which 'diverse cultures were given a New Zealand context'.<sup>8</sup> The compilation of a *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook* and Booklet, (to be discussed later in this introduction), indicates that the Gaidhealtachd community has a sense of its own history and it is hoped that this study of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School in its examination of how some descendants of the Scots, Irish and Welsh peoples who settled in New Zealand have interpreted their cultures, and how they celebrate their ancestry today, will go some way towards addressing the issue of the lack of cultural histories in New Zealand identified by Phillips.

Anthony Smith defines an ethnic or cultural community as a 'named human population with shared ancestry, myths, histories, and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity'.<sup>9</sup> This is an apt description of the community which has been formed by people who regularly attend the Gaidhealtachd, so this thesis is also a case study of how culturally based communities are created, how they are sustained, and how they develop over time. In this thesis the history of the Gaidhealtachd will be discussed in terms of the perspective of those who attend the

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<sup>6</sup> C. Bridge, & K. Fedorowich, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, p.10.

<sup>7</sup> Jock Phillips, 'Of Verhandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 24, 2 (Oct. 1990), p.134.

<sup>8</sup> Jock Phillips, 'Of Verhandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon', p.134.

Summer School - not only what happened and where, but also the participants understanding of these events. So, although this is a history thesis, it is informed to a degree by some of the literature, methods and concepts of Social Anthropology, and information from a Social Anthropology Fieldwork Project conducted in 2004 is incorporated within its framework.<sup>10</sup> As it is primarily concerned with matters of cultural identity and with the exploration of Celtic arts, languages, values and traditions, it could be possible to see the establishment of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School in 1990 as a postcolonial response to events of 1980s when Pakeha identity was coming under question. Although there is no evidence to suggest that postcolonial literature, thinking, or politics were influential in the formation of the Gaidhealtachd it is possible that postcolonial literature can help explain and locate the Gaidhealtachd within a wider context.

This questioning of Pakeha identity was a direct response to Maori identity politics of the 1970s when issues of land alienation, language, and cultural identity were the focus of Maori activists. The ability to publicise these issues nationally through the agency of such activities as the occupation of Bastion Point and Raglan, and the 1975 Land March, signified to the public that New Zealand could no longer be, in fact should never have been, considered a model for harmonious 'race relations'. The construct that New Zealand had the best race relations in the world - promoted by politicians and generally accepted both in New Zealand and internationally,<sup>11</sup> was also challenged by the 1981 tour of New Zealand by a rugby team from South Africa. Jock Phillips described the protest in New Zealand against this tour as; 'a protest against our whole identity as a rural, male-dominated society in which we primarily identified with the white British Empire'.<sup>12</sup> The aftermath of this tour underpinned a new attitude by Maori, and required an examination by Pakeha of their role in determining the direction of national policies, the contribution such polices might make to the makeup of a national identity, and their

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<sup>9</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991, p.21.

<sup>10</sup> Rosalind Howell, Fieldwork Project, *The Practice of Fieldwork*, Social Anthropology 146.303, Massey University, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Trevor Richards, *Dancing on Our Bones: New Zealand, South Africa, Rugby and Racism*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1999, p.239.

<sup>12</sup> Jock Phillips, cited in Trevor Richards, *Dancing on Our Bones*, p.243.

own identity as partner in the Treaty of Waitangi. David Pearson argues that an understanding of ethnic politics in settler societies requires, among other things, the recognition that 'aboriginal, settler and immigrant populations all have their prehistories [...] linked to, but still separable, from the process of intermingling and the foundational myths that resulted within a territory that becomes a homeland displaced or created for respective indigenous and arrivals'.<sup>13</sup> In its discussion of the cultural inheritance of a large sector of New Zealand's settler population and in answer to the requirement that 'reawakening of Maori to their past requires an awakening of the Pakeha to their past also',<sup>14</sup> this thesis will examine the Gaidhealtachd as a case study of why and how some people have addressed the issue of Pakeha identity.

In its examination of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School this thesis will engage with wider historical themes and questions too complex to be discussed fully within its word limit. Some of the key terms used, (such as British and Celtic), and the concepts discussed (such as cultural identity, diaspora and assimilation), require explanation and definition. Foremost among these is the term British, and while extensive examination of the meaning and makeup of the 'British' has been made by many historians, it is important to reiterate here how it is understood in this thesis.

The cultural character and the language of New Zealand's political, educational, and legal institutions reflect the ancestry of the major population group, who are usually described as 'British', and sometimes as 'English', or 'European'. These terms gloss over the ethnically diverse entities within them. James Belich notes that 'British, was not a race at all, but a mixture of Anglo-Saxon English, and Scots, Irish, and Welsh Celts, who, he says, along with at least five per cent of the New Zealand population of other ethnic minorities neither British or Maori, were marginalised and mythologised by the notion of New Zealanders as 'Better British',<sup>15</sup> thereby acknowledging that the word British is itself an ethnic plural.<sup>16</sup> As Akenson points out, immigrants to New Zealand

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<sup>13</sup> David Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society.: States of Unease*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, p.6.

<sup>14</sup> Jock Phillips, 'Of Verhandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon', p.134.

<sup>15</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, Middlesex: Penguin, 2001, p.216.

<sup>16</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.216.



from the British Isles came from a country where four different languages and many regional dialects were spoken, where there was no common land system, and whose peoples were not economically integrated.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, Akenson says, they did not describe themselves as British, and Britishness therefore becomes a 'projection of beliefs from the New World of New Zealand on to the Old World' of the British Isles.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, as mentioned by Stuart Hall, 'Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think',<sup>19</sup> and it was possibly after the 1707 Treaty of Union between England and Scotland which created the new political identity of 'Great Britain' and the 'British peoples', that a sense of acting in a collective capacity, particularly in the acquisition of empire, was begun by the disparate peoples of the British Isles. This will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

Rather than British, English, or European, some historians<sup>20</sup> have used the term Anglo Celtic to describe the English, Welsh, Scots and Irish immigrants to New Zealand. It is in a similar manner that the word Celtic is to be understood here, although the word insular precedes that of Celtic in order to distinguish the description of the Celtic peoples of the British Isles from the word Celtic as a generic term. While Barry Cunliffe concludes in *The Ancient Celts* that 'Celtic speaking peoples have had a long and complex history; their diversity in social and cultural terms is beyond dispute',<sup>21</sup> the concept of the Celts, both as an historical people and also as an ethnic group, has recently been the subject of wide spread debate. This will also be discussed further in Chapter Two.

Avril Bell suggests that the 'strategic remembering and forgetting of history is essential to the imagining of nationhood', and that the concept of New Zealand nationhood has, until the last decade or so, been governed by ideologies of uniform identity and of

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<sup>17</sup> Donald H. Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990, p.6.

<sup>18</sup> Donald H. Akenson, *Half the World from Home*, p.6.

<sup>19</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in Steven Vertovec, & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999, p.299.

<sup>20</sup> Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.221, Donald H. Akenson, *Half the World from Home*, p.10.

<sup>21</sup> Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts*, p.274.



forgetfulness.<sup>22</sup> The concept of uniform identity as applied to both Maori and Pakeha, and the Maori-Pakeha differentiation, have, according to Akenson, led to a misperception of the social history of New Zealand during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the period during which New Zealand identity was being forged.<sup>23</sup> Not only were Pakeha New Zealanders, even those from the British Isles, not a single people, but Maori also identified themselves by tribe, as members of whanau, hapu and iwi, rather than as Maori, although both have over time become accepted as inclusive ethnic groups. Both 'Pakeha' and 'Maori' can be interpreted therefore as concepts connected to colonisation.<sup>24</sup> The strategic remembering and forgetting of history can also be seen as connected to colonisation and to processes of assimilation. In 'Time and the Study of Assimilation',<sup>25</sup> Nancy Green suggests that models of assimilation should be situated historically and need to be 're-examined not simply as a description of immigration history per se but as an analytic category constructed by sociologists and historians over time and using different time frames'.<sup>26</sup> Milton Gordon writing in the 1960s on assimilation in the United States of America, identified three main theories of assimilation which could be linked to three distinct historical time frames - Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and cultural pluralism.<sup>27</sup> This is not too dissimilar to the concept expressed by Marcus Hansen in 1937 in what became known as 'Hansen's Law' - that the first generation emigrates, the second assimilates, and the third returns to its origins.<sup>28</sup> The fact that the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School has been held for seventeen years and is presently over subscribed with participants choosing to return year after year, indicates that Hansen's Law could be applied to some of the descendants of immigrants from the insular Celtic countries of Scotland, Ireland and Wales with third (and/or subsequent) generations wishing to return to, or to learn about, their cultural origins.

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<sup>22</sup> Avril Bell, 'We're just New Zealanders: Pakeha Identity Politics'. From *Nga Patai: Racism and Ethnic Relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, (eds.) P. Spoonley, C. Macpherson, and D. Pearson, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1996, p.157.

<sup>23</sup> Donald H. Akenson, p.6.

<sup>24</sup> Claudia Bell & Steve Matthewman, (eds.), *Cultural Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Identity, Space and Place*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.122.

<sup>25</sup> N. L. Green, 'Time and the Study of Assimilation', *Rethinking History*, Vol. 10, 2, June 2006, pp. 239-258.

<sup>26</sup> N. L. Green, 'Time and the Study of Assimilation', p.241.

<sup>27</sup> N. L. Green, 'Time and the Study of Assimilation', p.240.

<sup>28</sup> M. Hansen, 'The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant', address to the Augustana Historical Society, 15 May, 1937, in N. Green, 'Time and the Study of Assimilation', p.244.

The language of diasporic discourse is used extensively throughout this thesis. That the application of the concepts of diaspora to an immigrant settler population such as that of New Zealand is possible is due to new understandings and interpretations of diaspora in the second half of the twentieth century. A differentiation has been made by scholars such as Stuart Hall between the traditional understanding of diaspora as exile from, and desire for return to, a distant homeland, and 'the emergence of new identities in a postcolonial world'.<sup>29</sup> Steven Vertovec says that :

Diaspora is the term often used today to describe practically any population which is considered 'deterritoralised' or 'transnational' - that is, which has originated in a land other than which it currently resides, and whose social, economic, and political networks cross the borders of nation-states or, indeed span the globe. The rebirth of the notion of diaspora has stemmed from academics using it to characterise transnational ethnic groups and from intellectuals and activists from these populations who have found in the expression a positive way of constituting a 'hybrid' cultural and political identity.<sup>30</sup>

Vertovec also notes that the editor of the journal *Diaspora*, Kachig Tololyn, reported in 1998 that in seven years the journal had used the word diaspora to describe thirty-eight different groups.<sup>31</sup> Robin Cohen has attempted to distinguish this plethora of diaspora by a division into the categories of victim, labour, trade, cultural and imperial diaspora.<sup>32</sup> Cohen says that the powerful European nation-states established their own diasporas abroad to further their imperial plans, and that in the case of England, this was begun in 1606 when Bacon suggested to James I that by emigration England would gain 'a double commodity, in the avoidance of people here, and in making use of them there'.<sup>33</sup> Cohen says that once the principle of emigration which relieved overpopulation and put the undesirable sectors of the population (such as idlers, vagrants and criminals), to use elsewhere, was established, it was extended laterally.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Brad Patterson, (ed.), *From Ulster to New Ulster*, Wellington: Institute of Ulster Scots Studies, 2004, p.21.

<sup>30</sup> Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999, pp.xvi-xvii.

<sup>31</sup> Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, p.xvii.

<sup>32</sup> Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, p.xvii.

<sup>33</sup> Robin Cohen, 'Rethinking Babylon: Iconoclastic Conceptions of the Diasporic Experience', in Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, p.258.

Scottish crofters, troublesome Irish peasants, dissident soldiers (like the Levellers) all were shipped out with careless abandon. [...] The movement to encourage the export of the surplus British population reached its apogee in the work of the Cambridge professor of history, Sir John Seeley, who identified (1895:357-8) emigration as the key means of effecting "the peculiarly English movement of unparalleled expansion".<sup>35</sup>

This unparalleled expansion is usually referred to recently as the British or Anglo/Celtic Diaspora, and it is Cohen's last category, that of the imperial diaspora with which this thesis is concerned. The distinction made by Stuart Hall between the traditional understanding of diaspora which implies loss, and 'the emergence of new identities in a postcolonial world',<sup>36</sup> has also provided an alternative context within which diaspora can be examined. This is described by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett as rearticulation.<sup>37</sup> Here, the traditional approach to diaspora - that of disarticulation (displacement, detachment, uprooting and dispersion), is replaced by rearticulation - 'of how the local is produced and what forms it takes in the space of dispersal'.<sup>38</sup> It will be demonstrated in this study that the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School is an example of how a cultural community (the local) has been produced in one of the spaces of dispersal (Whangarei Heads) of the Anglo/Celtic diaspora.

Dalley and Labrum note that 'historians have always used fragments to build arguments and to create narratives',<sup>39</sup> and that the title *Fragments*, as a unifying theme for a collection of essays, represents and celebrates the fragmentary nature of approaches to the study of social history and the fragmentary nature of what we know of the past. The essays in *Fragments* make use of a number of historical sources including poetry, oral history and literary theory, and also those of the fragments of material culture such as fabric, clothing, and the built environment.<sup>40</sup> The primary sources used for the understanding of the history of the Gaidhealtachd, namely the *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet,

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<sup>34</sup> Robin Cohen, 'Rethinking Babylon', p.258.

<sup>35</sup> Robin Cohen, 'Rethinking Babylon', p.258.

<sup>36</sup> Brad Patterson, (ed.), *From Ulster to New Ulster*, Wellington: Institute of Ulster Scots Studies, 2004, p.21.

<sup>37</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Spaces of Dispersal', in Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, p.315.

<sup>38</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Spaces of Dispersal', p.315.

<sup>39</sup> B. Dalley, and B. Labrum, (eds.), *Fragments*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000, p.4.

<sup>40</sup> B. Dalley, and B. Labrum, p.4.

the *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*, the *Gaidhealtachd Memorial Church Service Programme*, and Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1989-2006, are comparable to those used in *Fragments* in that they are the fragmentary (and only) written material from which the development of the Gaidhealtachd can be documented, and also because the use of them has as its primary purpose 'to understand New Zealand culture by exploring fragments of life in the past'.<sup>41</sup> While some interviews have been conducted and information from a Social Anthropology Fieldwork project has been incorporated within this thesis, in the examination of the Gaidhealtachd the arguments presented here have been constructed almost entirely from the above mentioned documents, and the development of the Gaidhealtachd has been charted by the information provided by them. Approximately fifty copies of the forty paged A5 *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet were produced to mark the tenth anniversary of the Summer School and they include a brief description of the objectives, ethos, origins, venue, structure, traditions, protocol and the vision for the future of the Gaidhealtachd. Also included are the music and words for songs such as *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* ( the land of my fathers) and *The Flower of Scotland*, the steps and music for popular *ceilidh* dances, Gaelic and Irish proverbs, traditional Welsh, Irish and Scots recipes, a letter from John Munro of Whangarei Heads to the Nova Scotian newspaper *Mac-Tulla* dated 25th December 1896, the history of the Gaidhealtachd Knot and Irish Set Dancing, the addresses of clubs, societies and publications, an article on the Celtic languages, and *Cumha do Somhairle Morrison* (Lament for Sam Morrison - friend of the Gaidhealtachd and the Waipu Caledonian Society and Gaelic teacher in Whangarei), composed for the pipes by Brian Mitchell on the 10th December 1998, a day after Sam's death. In the forward to the booklet Douglas Chowns explains the reason behind its production:

This collection of works and accounts is a wonderful concept which brings together that which has been inspired at these annual [Gaidhealtachd] gatherings. Drawn from workshop or gifted to the assembled company, each item involved the heartfelt and very soul of those who conceived these moments and as such are expressions that are indeed the Gaidhealtachd itself - the ethos in which we believe here set to paper so that they may be remembered and again experienced to continue to ripple out in ever widening circles to inspire and encourage those who would be as with us.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> B. Dalley, and B. Labrum, p.9.

The *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet, along with the *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook* - a compilation of all of the written records of the Gaidhealtachd between 1989-2002, presents problems for referencing. Neither of these publications has page numbers. A similar problem is encountered in the use of the newsletters as some are dated by year, some by month or season, and others by number. This means that footnotes to these documents have no page reference and in the case of the newsletters, are not consistent. The only other primary source used for the Gaidhealtachd is information from the *Gaidhealtachd eNews* - a web based news service established in 2002 which has 130 addresses on its mailing list.

Apart from the fact that documents about the Gaidhealtachd written by and for the founders, organisers and participants of the Summer School, and newspaper articles, are the only primary source material available for this discussion, there is a further reason why they have been heavily relied on in the understanding of the history of the Gaidhealtachd. This is because, as the 'study of the past cannot be insulated from the historians ontological existence [and] it is not possible to maintain distance between the historian and his/her history',<sup>43</sup> it is important for me to acknowledge here my own centrality within the pages of this thesis. This is on two accounts - firstly in that I am a descendant of the peoples of the Anglo/Celtic diaspora with family from all the insular Celtic countries of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and secondly, that I have been a participant of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School for many of the last seventeen years. This participation has meant that I have needed to exert a cautionary approach in order that it is not my own 'insider' perspective which is presented here. The support and the sharing of information offered to me by members of the Gaidhealtachd, all of whom are known to me personally, has made this study possible.

Just as it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to 'recover' the history of New Zealanders of Celtic ancestry, it is equally impossible to 'reconstruct' the history of a group such as the Gaidhealtachd. This is because, as outlined in the Introduction to

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<sup>42</sup> Foreword, *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet, 1998.

<sup>43</sup> Alun Munslow, *The New History*, Harlow: Longman, 2003, p.137.



*The Nature of History Reader*,<sup>44</sup> the historical process which 'turns something which isn't in narrative form into narrative form [...] is just an act of the imagination,' making history both fictive and never definitive.<sup>45</sup> This is an attractive concept which allows for the consideration of one past but an infinity of histories according to the positioning of the individual historian. Jenkins and Munslow also maintain that all historical writing belongs to one of three genres: reconstructuralist, constructuralist or deconstructuralist, which is clearly reflected in the nature of his or her historical narrative.<sup>46</sup> This study of the Gaidhealtachd has, however, used more than one of these genres - it has engaged with the history of this group by a partial deconstruction of primary material such as the *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook* and *Gaidhealtachd* booklet in order to provide a narrative which in part reconstructs one history of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School.

This is a history thesis but as its approach has also been informed by the disciplines of Social Anthropology and Sociology the nature of the secondary literature available on the topic reflects this. While there are many books written on cultural identity most of these have little application within the context of New Zealand. Works which are relevant, such as *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*,<sup>47</sup> *Nga Take: Ethnic Relations and Racism in Aotearoa/New Zealand*,<sup>48</sup> and *Cultural Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Identity, Space and Place*,<sup>49</sup> concentrate on the Maori/Pakeha cultural divide, or, like *Tangata Tangata; The Changing Ethnic Contours of New Zealand*,<sup>50</sup> on the changing demographics of the New Zealand population. A notable exception to this is David Pearson's *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society: States of Unease*.<sup>51</sup> Pearson's study includes the settler societies of Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, and provides valuable insights and information. In

<sup>44</sup> Keith Jenkins, and Alun Munslow, (eds.), *The Nature of History Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> Keith Jenkins, and Alun Munslow, p.3.

<sup>46</sup> Keith Jenkins, and Alun Munslow, pp.4-5.

<sup>47</sup> Augie Fleras, and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999.

<sup>48</sup> P. Spoonley, D. Pearson, and C. Macpherson, *Nga Take: Ethnic Relations and Racism in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1991.

<sup>49</sup> C. Bell & S. Matthewman, (eds.), *Cultural Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Identity, Space and Place*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>50</sup> P. Spoonley, D. Pearson, and C. Macpherson, (eds.), *Tangata Tangata; The Changing Ethnic Contours of New Zealand*, Victoria: Dunmore Press, 2004.

a similar manner, general works on the formation of national identity are numerous, but limited in their application within this thesis. Belich's *Paradise Reforged*<sup>52</sup> and *Making Peoples*<sup>53</sup> however, do contain discussions of the makeup of Anglo/Celtic settler population of New Zealand which have provided reference points for the arguments presented here.

Although there does not appear to be any literature available which considers inclusively the insular Celtic peoples in New Zealand, some of the literature relating to Irish and Scottish immigration to New Zealand contains valuable general discussion as part of its specific focus. Notable on this account are Akenson's *Half the World From Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950*,<sup>54</sup> and the collection edited by Brad Patterson *Ulster-New Zealand Migration and Cultural Transfers*.<sup>55</sup> Both these books also contain interesting perspectives on the concept of diaspora. While providing informative and stimulating reading in an extensive coverage their own particular topic, *A Distant Shore; Irish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*,<sup>56</sup> *The Heather and the Fern*,<sup>57</sup> *Vanished Kingdoms: The Irish in Australia and New Zealand: A Personal Excursion*,<sup>58</sup> *Through Irish Eyes: Australian and New Zealand Images of the Irish 1788-1948*,<sup>59</sup> and *The Irish in New Zealand: Historical Contexts & Perspectives*,<sup>60</sup> have supplied general information for the framework of this thesis. W. J. Gardner's, *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History*,<sup>61</sup> has also been consulted in this context. Well illustrated and sensitively written, Tony Simpson's study *The*

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<sup>51</sup> D. Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society: States of Unease*, New York: Palgrave, 2000.

<sup>52</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, Middlesex: Penguin, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the end of the Nineteenth Century*, Auckland: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1996.

<sup>54</sup> D. H. Akenson, *Half the World from Home*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990.

<sup>55</sup> Brad Patterson, (ed.), *Ulster - New Zealand Migration and Cultural Transfers*, Dublin: Four Courts Press Ltd., 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Lyndon Fraser, *A Distant Shore; Irish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2000.

<sup>57</sup> Tom Brooking & Jennie Coleman, (eds.), *The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, *Vanished Kingdoms: The Irish in Australia and New Zealand: A Personal Excursion*, Kensington, N.S.W.: N.S.W. University Press, 1990.

<sup>59</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, *Through Irish Eyes: Australian and New Zealand Images of the Irish 1788 - 1948*, Richmond, Victoria: David Lovell Publishers, 1994.

<sup>60</sup> Brad Patterson, (ed.), *The Irish in New Zealand: Historical Contexts & Perspectives*, Wellington: Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 2002.

<sup>61</sup> W. J. Gardner, *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History*, Christchurch: Regional Press, 1999.

*Immigrants: the Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand 1830-1890*,<sup>62</sup> provides comprehensive and useful material relating to the economic, social and political background of both New Zealand and the British Isles during the period of mass immigration.

Two of the books which have been written specifically on the settlement of the Nova Scotian Scots at Waipu are each problematic in their own way. Although *The Gael Fares Forth: The Romantic Story of Waipu and Sister Settlements*<sup>63</sup> specifies in the first sentence of the introduction that Waipu as used in the text 'may be taken to connote all the Highland settlements in North Auckland',<sup>64</sup> the only actual mention of Whangarei Heads or its school is in the list of teachers employed in the four schools established by the Waipu community. Furthermore, as its title indicates, it is a romantic account which reflects the writers perceived image of how life was in these Scottish settlements. Maureen Molloy's *Those Who Speak to the Heart*<sup>65</sup> is a sociological survey, which, not least among its problems in terms of this thesis, doesn't include an index. Other books such as *The Scots of New Zealand*,<sup>66</sup> *Far Off in Sunlit Places: Stories of the Scots in Australia and New Zealand*,<sup>67</sup> and *To the Ends of the Earth: Norman McLeod and the Highlanders' Migration to Nova Scotia and New Zealand*,<sup>68</sup> while discussing the Nova Scotian settlement at Waipu, make no mention of the community of Whangarei Heads. This omission in itself is interesting. The only literature available which does discuss the settlement and development of the Whangarei Heads area are two books written specifically for the Centennial, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*,<sup>69</sup> and for the 125th Jubilee, *Whangarei Heads - 125 years*.<sup>70</sup> Both these books have been invaluable in the

<sup>62</sup> Tony Simpson, *The Immigrants: The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand 1830-1890*, Auckland: Godwit, 1997.

<sup>63</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth: The Romantic Story of Waipu and Sister Settlements*, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., 1935.

<sup>64</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth*, p.13.

<sup>65</sup> Maureen Molloy, *Those Who Speak to the Heart: the Nova Scotian Scots at Waipu 1854-1920*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press Ltd., 1991.

<sup>66</sup> G. L. Pearce, *The Scots of New Zealand*, Auckland: Collins, 1976.

<sup>67</sup> Jim Hewitson, *Far Off in Sunlit Places: Stories of the Scots in Australia and New Zealand*, Edinburgh: Cannongate Books, 1998.

<sup>68</sup> Neil Robinson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Norman McLeod and the Highlanders' Migration to Nova Scotia and New Zealand*, Auckland: Harper Collins, 1997.

<sup>69</sup> W. R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, Whangarei: Whangarei Heads School Centennial Committee, 1956.

<sup>70</sup> Diana McManaway, *Whangarei Heads - 125 years*, Whangarei: Whangarei Heads School 125th Jubilee Committee, 1983.



understanding of the history of the area and in the case of Diana McManaway's *Whangarei Heads - 125 years*, her referencing has enabled the tracing and the sighting of original documents relating to the history of Whangarei Heads School. Brief mention of the Whangarei Heads community is also made by Florence Keene in both *O Te Raki: Maori Legends of the North*,<sup>71</sup> and *Between Two Mountains: A History of Whangarei*.<sup>72</sup>

The literature available relating to the wider issues discussed in this thesis is considerable. On diaspora, the collection of works edited by Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*,<sup>73</sup> provided excellent background reading material for an understanding of diaspora. Containing the works of many scholars each writing from a different perspective, *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, links three broad themes of diaspora - contemporary migration flows, the reconstitution of the concept of diaspora, and the emergence of transnationalism. With a specific focus on the interconnected themes which define what was known as the 'British World' of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, also contains interesting discussion on diaspora and the relevance of the term as a description of British migrations.

On the topic of the Celts, many sources are available. However, in its examination of the concept of Celtic, this thesis has relied heavily on the writing of Simon James,<sup>74</sup> an Iron Age and Roman archaeologist with the British Museum who is currently at Durham University. His alternative history of the British Isles which challenges the perceived history of the Celticness of the insular Celtic countries is a succinct and well formulated expression of the current debate over this issue.

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<sup>71</sup> Florence Keene, *O Te Raki: Maori Legends of the North*, Auckland: Paul's Book Arcade, 1963.

<sup>72</sup> Florence Keene, *Between Two Mountains: A History of Whangarei*, Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1966.

<sup>73</sup> Steven Vertovec, & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999.

<sup>74</sup> Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient People or Modern Invention?*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Hobsbawn, in the introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*,<sup>75</sup> states that 'Inventing tradition, it is assumed here, is essentially a process of formalisation and ritualization, characterised by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition'.<sup>76</sup> This concept and others discussed in *The Invention of Tradition*, as well as interpretation and critique of these in *Other Sites*,<sup>77</sup> have provided useful insight in the consideration of the formation of recent cultural groups such as the Gaidhealtachd. In this context two books by Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*,<sup>78</sup> and *Signifying Identities*,<sup>79</sup> both of which consider issues such as the way in which people see themselves as belonging to ethnic groups and to society in general, and the nature of the boundaries which divide such groups, have also been consulted extensively.

Chapter One of this thesis will introduce the Gaidhealtachd and Whangarei Heads School. The introductory material on Whangarei Heads School will discuss the history of the school in the context of a creation story of the Gaidhealtachd. It will also suggest that the school and the Whangarei Heads area generally can be understood as a clearly delimited space - a diasporic space, occupied in 1856 by the Nova Scotian settlers and founders of the school, and since 1990 by the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School.

Chapter Two will discuss the concept of Celtic as the key theme underlying a spatially diffuse, temporally different community. It will examine how the word Celtic has been interpreted in New Zealand since the late nineteenth century, how it is interpreted by participants of the Gaidhealtachd, and how these interpretations have been influenced by, or differ from, overseas perceptions. This chapter will also include an overview of the present debate surrounding the existence of the insular Celtic peoples of Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

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<sup>75</sup> E. Hobsbawn and T. Ranger, (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1983.

<sup>76</sup> E. Hobsbawn and T. Ranger, (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, p.4.

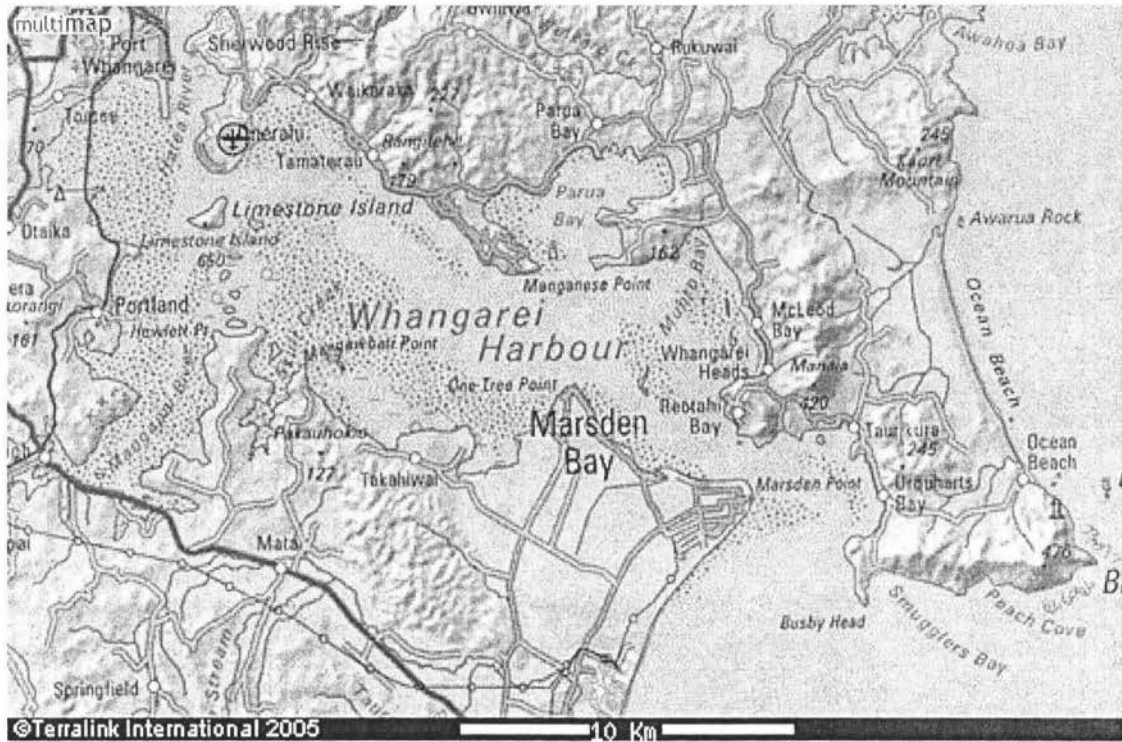
<sup>77</sup> M. Goldsmith and K. Barber, (eds.), *Other Sites: Social Anthropology and the Politics of Interpretation*, Palmerston North: Dept. of Social Anthropology, Massey University, 1992.

<sup>78</sup> A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Chichester: Ellis Horwood Ltd., 1985.

<sup>79</sup> A. P. Cohen, *Signifying Identities* London: Routledge, 2000.

Chapter Three will examine the practices of the Gaidhealtachd - what is done and what meaning this has for those involved. It will demonstrate how the theme of Celtic has provided the fundamental context through which the Gaidhealtachd, as a cultural community, has been created, sustained and how it has developed. An argument for the understanding of the Gaidhealtachd as a bounded community - bounded spatially by its homeland of Whangarei Heads School, temporally, by the annual seven day period 2-7 January, and symbolically by the key concept of Celtic ancestry, art, music, dance, and identity, will be presented.

Chapter Four will discuss connections. It will ask whether there are any connections between the nineteenth century immigrants to New Zealand from the insular Celtic countries and their descendants. It will also discuss links between the Gaidhealtachd and Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotian community of Whangarei Heads, between the individual people of the Gaidhealtachd, between the initiatives and networks established by the Gaidhealtachd, and between the Gaidhealtachd and other organisations. It will argue that it is through these connections that the people of the Gaidhealtachd - descendants of the Imperial British/Celtic Diaspora - have created and sustained a community which demonstrates one way in which diasporic consciousness has emerged and evolved in its spaces of dispersal. It will also ask, as part of a world wide diaspora community of Celtic ancestry, how unique the Gaidhealtachd actually is.



Map of Whangarei Heads area showing Munro Bay, McLeod Bay, Mt. Manaia, Taurikura Bay, Urquharts Bay and Reotahi Bay.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> <http://maps.yellowpages.co.nz> accessed 6 February, 2007.

## Chapter One

### Whangarei Heads School and the Gaidhealtachd

*'The Celtic Diaspora is vast, yet still the clans gather'.<sup>1</sup>*

This chapter will focus on the establishment of both Whangarei Heads School and the Gaidhealtachd. Historical material on the school is given considerable space here in order to explain why both the school and the Whangarei Heads area generally are seen as significant by those who initially founded the Gaidhealtachd and those who have subsequently attended it. An argument will also be presented for consideration of Whangarei Heads School as 'diasporic space'. Derived from the Greek *diaspeirein* (disperse), the Compact Oxford Dictionary gives two entries for diaspora: 'The dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel chiefly in the 8th-6th century BC', and 'the dispersion of any people from their traditional homeland'.<sup>2</sup> Diaspora, in the sense of its second meaning, has recently been used as a synonym for overseas migration and settlement of peoples from the British Isles.<sup>3</sup> This interpretation of the meaning of diaspora as an explanation of social processes has made possible a connection between the seemingly disparate colonising settlers and the traditional concept of diaspora. According to James Clifford 'Diaspora discourse articulates, or bends together, both roots *and* routes to construct [what Gilroy describes as] alternate public spheres, forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identification outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference'.<sup>4</sup>

A 1997 information sheet on the Gaelic Bible held by Whangarei Public Library describes the word Gaidhealtachd as 'the Homeland'.<sup>5</sup> This interpretation of the concept of a homeland as a space or place outside the national framework, but within its boundaries, implies that Whangarei Heads School, where the Gaidhealtachd takes place, is seen as its homeland. Here, where participants take part in dance, music, and other

<sup>1</sup>John and Caitlin Matthews, Afterword, *Celtic Wisdom: A Celtic Shaman's Source Book*, Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1994, p.433

<sup>2</sup>*Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, C. Soames, and S. Hawker, (eds.), <http://www.askoxford.com> accessed 29 October, 2006.

<sup>3</sup>C. Bridge, & K. Fedorowich, (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p.19.

<sup>4</sup>James Clifford, 'Diasporas', *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1994, p.308, (quoted in R. McClean, 'How We Prepare Them In India', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2003, p.141).

<sup>5</sup>*Gaidhealtachd Scrap Book*, courtesy of Wayne Lawrence, 2nd July, 2006.

activities perceived as traditional cultural forms inherited from homelands temporarily and spatially removed, could be described as 'diasporic space'. Rosalind McClean argues that 'the 'diasporic framework' provided by the idea of a clearly delimited 'space' invites examination of local situations and case studies and their interrogation by reference to a global context'.<sup>6</sup> The 'clearly delimited space' in the instance of this thesis is Whangarei Heads School - a space occupied in 1856 by the original settlers and founders of the school, and since 1990 by the Gaidhealtachd.

The first settlers at Whangarei Heads were Highland Scots from St. Ann's, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, and members of Norman McLeod's Waipu settlement. In *The Heather and the Fern* the Waipu community is described as being atypical of Highland and Island Scots settlement patterns in New Zealand, in that generally the Scots were 'dispersed rather than concentrated in their ultimate settlement',<sup>7</sup> and because 'whole clans never shifted here as they did to Canada'.<sup>8</sup> Between the years 1853-1880 over a quarter of Scots emigrants from the United Kingdom departed from ports outside of Scotland,<sup>9</sup> and as many Highlanders were resident in southern Scotland prior to their departure for New Zealand, distinctions between Highland and Lowland Scots emigration to New Zealand are often difficult to establish.<sup>10</sup> There is no doubt however that Norman McLeod's community were Highland Scots, most of whom came originally from Assynt in Sutherland. Despite the belief expressed in *The Heather and the Fern* that 'Even the formidable Reverend Norman McLeod [...] failed to shape a community that remained distinctive across the generations',<sup>11</sup> Waipu and her sister settlement of Whangarei Heads host both the Annual Highland Games at Waipu (Jan. 1st) and the Annual Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School (Jan. 2-7) at Whangarei Heads School.

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<sup>6</sup> Rosalind McClean, "How We Prepare Them In India": British Diasporic Imaginings and Migration to New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 37, No. 2, 2003, p.141.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Richards, "The Last of the Clan and Other Highland Emigrants" in Tom Brooking & Jennie Coleman, (eds.), *The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2003, p.34.

<sup>8</sup> Tom Brooking, "Sharing out the Haggis", *The Heather and the Fern*, p.50.

<sup>9</sup> Rosalind McClean, "How We Prepare Them In India", p.143.

<sup>10</sup> Eric Richards, "The Last of the Clan and other Highland Emigrants", *The Heather and the Fern*, p.35.



## Whangarei Heads School

*'If there's a better place, I hav'na found it'.<sup>12</sup>*



*Mt. Manaia from McLeod Bay, 3 July 2006*

*Photograph: Ros Howell*

At the entrance to Whangarei Harbour and across Bream Bay from Waipu and the Nova Scotian settlement of Norman McLeod, Mt. Manaia dominates the playing fields of Whangarei Heads School. There are many Maori legends relating to Mt. Manaia, one of which is told by Florence Keene in "O Te Raki".<sup>13</sup> In this legend the mountains of Manaia, Mangaraho, Tokatoka, Motowhitiki and Taungatara become dissatisfied in Hawaiki and decide to follow Kupe across the ocean to Aotearoa. To Maori the word Hawaiki is the generic term for homeland, and is used to refer only to the last homeland and not to a specific island.<sup>14</sup> Ranginui Walker says that 'the last Hawaiki for some of the migrating tribes may well have been within New Zealand', citing Northland as an example.<sup>15</sup> It is in this context that the Gaidhealtachd is a homeland - not in that it is where people came from but where the cultural activities of a more distant homeland take place. To Maori, the movement of cultural and geographical icons (Manaia for example) to Aotearoa can be understood as symbolic of migration and the key element

<sup>11</sup> Tom Brooking, "Sharing out the Haggis", *The Heather and the Fern*, p.54.

<sup>12</sup> Kenny Rob McKenzie, in W.R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, Whangarei: Whangarei Heads School Centennial Committee, 1956, p.51.

<sup>13</sup> Florence Keene, *O Te Raki: Maori Legends of the North*, Auckland: Paul's Book Arcade, 1963, pp.159-160.

<sup>14</sup> Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou: Struggle Without End*, Auckland: Penguin, 1990, p.37.

for Maori in becoming *Tangatawhenua*, (people of the land).<sup>16</sup> To those of the Gaidhealtachd, the celebration of the traditions of their Scots, Irish and Welsh forefathers is seen also as part of their New Zealand identity - of 'living inside (the nation), but with a difference'.<sup>17</sup>

A further legend of Mt. Manaia is repeated in a letter of December 25 1896 by John Munro, the leader of the Whangarei Heads community, to the *Mac-Tulla* (Gaelic for echo) newspaper in Nova Scotia. Vallance says that Munro could be described as 'the father of the Whangarei Heads District'.<sup>18</sup> He was the first superintendent of Whangarei Heads School, Member for the Northern Division of the Provincial Council between 1856-1861 and 1866-1868, and Member of Parliament for Marsden 1860-1866, 1869-1870, and 1874-1875. Vallance says that at the time of Munro's first election to the Provincial Council there was conflict between the Central Executive and the Provinces and that Munro's election provided the required support and sponsorship for Provisional Superintendent Williamson's proposed Auckland Immigration Act (1861). This Act secured for the Nova Scotians the Special Settlement at Waipu and also earned John Munro the nickname "the diplomist".<sup>19</sup> The *Mac-Tulla* was a newspaper for Gaelic speakers edited by Johnathon G. MacKinnon and published in Sydney, Nova Scotia between the years 1892-1904. Munro begins his letter with 'I understand that your readers enjoy the letters I send you about the situation in this country and the things that happen', and, more important than the legend of Manaia (which Munro called *Benin Maharani*), and after a lengthy description of the anchorage and shipping channels, Munro describes the location of the community from St. Ann's.

The anchorage is not a direct approach; it veers a northerly direction again there is a slope of about twelve miles to the headland (*Bream Head*); this is about three miles wide from the anchorage to the ocean. In this distance there are seven or eight hills some of them over 1000 feet high and about a mile distance to the tops. If you take these hills together they look like heads, so the area is appropriately called "Whangarei Heads". These hills are an uncommonly beautiful sight. There

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<sup>15</sup> Ranginui Walker, p.38.

<sup>16</sup> Heiwari Johnson, Kaumatua, Pikiparia Marae, Kohukohu, Hokianga, 20 August, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> James Clifford, 'Diasporas' in Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999, p.221.

<sup>18</sup> W. R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, Whangarei: Whangarei Heads School Centennial Committee, 1956, p.37.

<sup>19</sup> W. R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, p.37.



is level ground between the hills and the base of the hills and the people who came from St. Ann's have their land holdings [there].<sup>20</sup>

John Munro was the owner of the *Gertrude*, one of the six ships which were built between 1851 and 1859 by the community which left Nova Scotia under the leadership of the Rev. Norman McLeod. With stops in Sydney and Auckland the first of these arrived at Waipu Cove in 1854. Around eight hundred people were part of this migration and on arrival in Northland some families crossed Bream Bay to settle at Whangarei Heads. Vallance lists these as the following: From the *Margaret*: Donald McGregor, Christina McRae and their six children, Donald McLeod, Helen Munro and seven children, John D. McLeod, Ann McGregor and eight children, George McLeod, another Ann McGregor and one child, and John Grant McLeod, son of the Rev. Norman McLeod. From the *Highland Lass*: Kenneth Stuart,<sup>21</sup> his wife Margaret McGregor and their five children. From the *Gertrude*: John Munro (owner of the *Gertrude*), Isabella McKenzie and six children, and Robert McDonald and his wife Margaret McMillan. From the *Spray*: Alex McKenzie, Ann Stuart and three children, Alex and Flora Stuart and one child, and Kenneth Stuart. From the *Bredalbane*: Roderick Fraser and his wife Dolina McLeod, John McDonald, Mary McLeod and nine children, Alex and Margaret McLeod and eight children, Choan Stuart, Kenneth Ferguson and Flora McDonald.<sup>22</sup>

These families (and the Urquharts from Ross-Shire in Scotland), settled at the Heads in 1856 and were responsible for the establishment of Whangarei Heads School in late 1857 or early 1858. It was the second secular school founded in New Zealand, the first being at Waipu in early 1857. The Auckland Education Act of 1857 states that 'voluntary efforts should be aided by grants from the Provincial revenue',<sup>23</sup> and it was these grants (an amount approximately half of a teachers annual salary) which enabled settler communities to provide education for their children. Although Whangarei Heads School is recorded as having begun to receive Provisional Council aid from early 1858,

<sup>20</sup> Mac-Tulla, Sydney, Cape Breton, December 25, 1896, in *Gaidhealtachd Scrap Book*. (Translated by Mairi MacDonald, Killearn).

<sup>21</sup> Various spelt Stuart or Stewart.

<sup>22</sup> W. R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, pp.33-34.

<sup>23</sup> A. G. Butchers, *The Education System: A Concise History of the New Zealand Education System*, Auckland: The National Printing Co. Ltd., 1932, p.33.

a letter dated January 4th 1858 from the first headmaster Horace Rowlands to the Secretary of the Board of Education asking for extra aid for the school, indicates that it may have been in operation before this.<sup>24</sup>

*Sir,*

*I beg to forward the Queries with respect to the School at this place, together with the answers thereto. I also beg to make the following remarks with reference to the school, which I have no doubt Mr Munro will explain more fully.*

*The building I have lately occupied for the purpose of teaching, not being sufficiently central, nor being quite in accordance with the rules of the Board, the people here intend building forthwith a house suitable not only for School Purposes but also for the performance of Divine worship therein should a Clergyman visit the district. For the present therefore I must conduct the business in the old schoolroom, or in the house of one of the settlers.*

*I am sure that without extra aid from the Board, no one could be induced to remain and teach in this locality, for although the children are numerous, the parents are few, and they having exhausted their means to emigrate to this country, are mostly poor. I have no doubt however that after the first year has passed they will not require extra assistance.*

*I beg to forward the certificates as to my moral character herewith.*

*I am Sir  
Your obt. Servant  
Horace R. Rowlands.<sup>25</sup>*

There is no evidence to indicate whether or not this extra aid was granted but a description of the original school building in the Inspectors Report of April 1858 describes it as having an earthen floor, no fireplace, a thatched but not weatherproof roof, and adds that "The whole building has in short a most repulsive tendency and requires immediate and vast alterations".<sup>26</sup> About a half a mile from the present site, the first school building was just below the saddle between McLeods Bay and Taurikura.<sup>27</sup> A new school building was also mentioned in the Inspector's Report of 1866,<sup>28</sup> but it wasn't until 1877 that Auckland Education Board records state that in January a site for a new schoolhouse was given by Donald McGregor and that the building was completed in the same year.<sup>29</sup> At the foot of Mt. Manaia, this building was a few hundred metres from where the school is situated today.

<sup>24</sup> Diana McManaway, *Whangarei Heads - 125 years*, Whangarei: Whangarei Heads School 125th Jubilee Committee, 1983, p.21.

<sup>25</sup> NZMS 598 Box 11, Folder 2, Auckland Public Library.

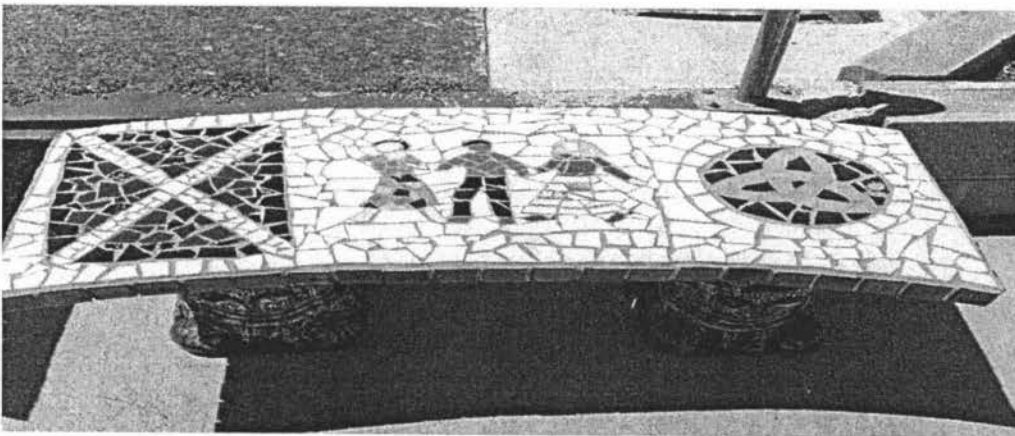
<sup>26</sup> NZMS 598 Box 2, Folders iii - vii Auckland Public Library.

<sup>27</sup> W. R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, p.47.

<sup>28</sup> NZMS 598 Box 2, Folders iii - vii, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>29</sup> Diana McManaway *Whangarei Heads*, p.25.

As it can be seen in the context of a creation story of the Gaidhealtachd, the history of Whangarei Heads School is discussed at some length below. The *Gaidhealtachd* booklet says that: 'Whangarei Heads School inspired the founding of the Gaidhealtachd because of its historical significance as the oldest continuously operated settler school in New Zealand and its establishment by the Scottish Gaelic community of Whangarei Heads'.<sup>30</sup> That the space of Whangarei Heads School and its association with the settlers from Nova Scotia is important to the Gaidhealtachd is substantiated by other excerpts from the *Gaidhealtachd* booklet - in the naming of the Gaidhealtachd, 'we use the Scottish orthography because of the history of the Whangarei Heads area',<sup>31</sup> and in the relationship between the two, 'the relationship of the Gaidhealtachd with the local Whangarei Heads community is highly valued'.<sup>32</sup> While there is no dominant discourse or construct, the present memories of this period are that the school was established by the Gaelic speaking settlers from Nova Scotia. The Gaidhealtachd has played a large part in informing the wider community of the historical aspects of Whangarei Heads School and the community which established it, by both the activities carried out as part of the Summer School programme and also by cultural items (such as the Gaidhealtachd Knot and pole) and artwork (the ongoing Mosaic Project, for example) which are permanent fixtures of the school grounds.



*Mosaic seat in school playground made by Gaidhealtachd participants. Photograph: Ros Howell*

<sup>30</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, 1999.

<sup>32</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, 1999.

As mentioned in the *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, Whangarei Heads School is the longest continuously operated secular settler school in New Zealand. Waipu, the first opened, was temporarily closed due to lack of funding sometime between 1867-1870. In *The Gael Fares Forth*, McKenzie reports that 'the Whangarei, the Waipu Central and the Cove Schools had been re-opened in 1870 after having been closed for some time'.<sup>33</sup> He also says that 'in the year 1866-7 there were only four public schools north of Auckland and they were all in Scottish settlements',<sup>34</sup> so this closure must have been between 1867 and 1869. Butchers describes 1867 as a 'disastrous period of retrenchment' for the Auckland Provincial Council, resulting initially, in a reduction of the funds available to the Education Board for teacher subsidy, and eventually, in the repeal of the Education Act altogether.<sup>35</sup> He says that 'many schools went out of existence and in the country particularly the means of education practically ceased to exist'.<sup>36</sup> The closure of Waipu and other schools mentioned above may have been due to this withdrawal of grants from the Provincial Council.

Whangarei Heads is known today as having once been a Gaelic speaking school, and while this is in essence true, it was not a conscious choice by those who established the school that it should have Gaelic as its language, but rather that neither the parents nor the pupils spoke anything else. McKenzie describes the Scots community in Nova Scotia (and for some years in New Zealand), as totally self-contained, with few, if any, members speaking English. He adds that 'they preferred to speak Gaelic even though it made their isolation more complete'.<sup>37</sup> This sense of isolation, coupled with the fact that, unlike Cape Breton Island, the majority of the population in Northland spoke English, was probably the reason why in 1857/1858 an English speaking teacher was sought for the school. Horace Rowlands became that teacher and various stories are related as to how this came about. In *Whangarei Heads - 125 Years* Diana McManaway says that Rowlands married Christie Ann Urquhart from the Heads in Waipu in 1856 and in 1857 joined the staff of the Auckland Board of Education who appointed him to Whangarei

<sup>33</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth: The Romantic Story of Waipu and Sister Settlements*, Auckland: Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., 1935, p.191.

<sup>34</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth*, p.191. The four schools were Waipu Central, Waipu Upper (or Braigh), Whangarei and Whangarei Heads.

<sup>35</sup> A. G. Butchers, *The Education System*, p.33.

<sup>36</sup> A. G. Butchers, p.33.

<sup>37</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth*, p.3.

Heads School. She suggests that it was the link with his wife's family who, along with other families, were trying to establish a school at the Heads which prompted him to seek this appointment.<sup>38</sup>

Others, however, tell a different and more colourful story. Both Keene<sup>39</sup> and Vallance<sup>40</sup> relate that in response to the communities desire for an English speaking tutor for their children, one of the parents, John Munro, went to Auckland in search of someone suitable. Finding a well dressed and well spoken young man recently arrived in New Zealand who refused the offer of becoming a teacher as he intended a career in banking, Munro invited him for a drink in a nearby hotel. Shortly afterwards Munro arrived on the wharf with Rowlands asleep in a handcart. Twenty hours later Rowlands was in Whangarei Harbour and accepted the position of teacher, subsequently marrying Christie Ann Urquhart.

These stories of a search for an English speaking teacher and Rowlands letter of 4 January 1857 which mentions 'The building I have lately occupied for the purpose of teaching', support the suggestion that the children of Whangarei Heads were receiving some form of schooling prior to 1857. That education was considered of great importance to the Scots community is demonstrated by McKenzie's opening words in Chapter Three of *The Gael Fares Forth*: 'In Scottish people love of learning has become something like second nature. Not only did our ancestors carry that love to North America, but they had with them men capable of satisfying their mental hunger'.<sup>41</sup> Norman McLeod's first school at St. Ann's in Nova Scotia was opened in the summer of 1821, a year after his arrival.<sup>42</sup> He had also opened a school in Assynt before his departure. Scottish immigrants to New Zealand are understood to have made a distinctive contribution to the development of the education system,<sup>43</sup> and were more influential than any other group in maintaining that secondary education should be

<sup>38</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth*, p22.

<sup>39</sup> Florence Keene, *Between Two Mountains: A History of Whangarei*, p.233.

<sup>40</sup> W. R. Vallance, *The Story of Whangarei Heads*, p.38.

<sup>41</sup> N. R. McKenzie, p.27. (He refers here particularly to Norman McLeod).

<sup>42</sup> Neil Robinson, *To the Ends of the Earth*, Auckland: Harper Collins, 1997, p.63.

<sup>43</sup> Tom Brooking, 'Sharing out the Haggis', *The Heather and the Fern*, p.59.

provided for both sexes.<sup>44</sup> The importance of education was not shared by all members of the settler community in New Zealand however. In answer to a statement in 1849 by A. Dome and the Committee on Education of the New Munster Legislative Council that it was 'the duty of the Government to provide education [...] and to compel parents to give their children the benefit of such education when provided',<sup>45</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Eyre replied that:

The principle of compulsory education involves - to Englishmen at least - so new and startling a departure from ordinary practice, that much consideration and many enquires would be necessary before a Government would feel justified in proposing its adoption.<sup>46</sup>

Education for European settlers remained the concern of the Provincial Councils until 1877 when the Education Act providing for free education between the ages of 5-15, and compulsory education for ages 7-13 was passed by Parliament. During the debates which for many years preceded the passing of the 1877 Act it is interesting that in order to support his argument that universal education benefited both society and the individual, Ball, the member for Mongonui, quoted from a Report of the Nova Scotia Board of Education:

The future prosperity of a country is closely related to the education of the people, for the solid wealth of any state consists in educated and industrious men and women.<sup>47</sup>

Names on the Whangarei Heads School roll for 1858 indicate that the children attending were all from the Nova Scotian community and that both girls and boys were included.<sup>48</sup> In 1874, of the 33 children enrolled, only three - the daughter of the headmaster, the daughter of the Irish Murphy family and one other, came from outside this community. This is considered significant to the people of the Gaidhealtachd as the first language of these children, and their parents, was Gaelic, or, as it is usually

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<sup>44</sup> Tom Brooking, 'Sharing out the Haggis', *The Heather and the Fern*, p.60.

<sup>45</sup> *New Zealand Government Gazette* (New Munster), June 1849.

<sup>46</sup> *New Zealand Government Gazette* (New Munster), June 1849.

<sup>47</sup> Parliamentary Debates, 1869, (6):523.

<sup>48</sup> Northland Room, Whangarei Public Library.



expressed, they 'had the Gaelic'. Subsequent rolls indicate a steady increase of new settlers at the Heads and by 1914 there were fewer descendants of the original families enrolled and also that numbers at the school had increased considerably, peaking in 1918 to 1957. This was probably due to the opening of the freezing works at Reotahi as numbers decreased again in 1921 when a fire at the works resulted in over one hundred people losing their jobs.<sup>49</sup> It is possible that some of the place names of Whangarei Heads are Gaelic names which have been Anglicised or thought of as original Maori words and this is most likely the case for Reotahi which was probably the Gaelic word *Rìgh Taigh* (meaning home of the king) after a local identity known as "the King".<sup>50</sup> In a similar manner, "Darky's Hill" was possibly *dachaidh*, meaning home.<sup>51</sup> The school roll indicates a similar increase in size when the road was sealed as far as McKenzie Bay in the early 1970s, and a decrease in recent times due to the completion of sealing to Ocean Beach and the resulting increase in land prices.

While the names of the bays of Whangarei Heads - Munro, McLeod, McKenzie, and Urquharts, and the children's names on the school roll, are a permanent reminder of the Nova Scotian community who first settled at the Heads, Whangarei Heads School is today a primary school much like any other in rural New Zealand. There is however, as demonstrated in the three examples below, evidence which suggests that the school could be considered as 'diasporic space', and the school community as 'living inside (the dominant culture) but with a difference'.

The 1857 Auckland Education Act stated that the granting of state aid was dependant, among other things, on roll numbers and the keeping of a daily register, and that the School Committee were to choose a superintendent to ensure the Boards regulations were being adhered to.<sup>52</sup> Whangarei Heads School superintendent was John Munro. In September 1858 Bernard Reynolds of Auckland wrote to the Education Board accusing the school and Munro of falsifying the register although ensuing inspection by the

<sup>49</sup> Diana McManaway *Whangarei Heads*, p33.

<sup>50</sup> Brian Mitchell 1998, *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet.

<sup>51</sup> Brian Mitchell 1998, *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet.

<sup>52</sup> A. G. Butchers, p.33.

Board showed that these allegations were unfounded.<sup>53</sup> They had probably resulted from a misunderstanding of the Scottish practice of handing down names and of the fact that within the same clan there was usually little variation in names.<sup>54</sup> That this is likely is supported by a passage in McKenzie: 'The custom of using a second surname of this kind is convenient, if not necessary, in a place where many people of the same name live. The practice was very common among our settlers'.<sup>55</sup>

Further evidence suggesting that Whangarei Heads School could be considered as 'diasporic space', can be seen by the following two excerpts from the *Northern Advocate*. On March 16th 1901 The *Advocate* reported that after items were presented at the Whangarei Heads School children's concert, God Save the King was sung for the first time in public. After this the hall [Taurikura] was 'cleared for dancing according to their ancient custom'.<sup>56</sup> This 'ancient custom' would have been a traditional *ceilidh*. Also in the *Northern Advocate*, (September 1944) is evidence of a continuing link between the school and Nova Scotia.

#### TREES PLANTED TO CELEBRATE WHANGAREI HEADS NOVA SCOTIAN SETTLEMENT

One of a series in Northland to mark the migration of Nova Scotian pioneers to New Zealand 90 years ago, a grove of trees was planted yesterday in the grounds of the Whangarei Heads School.]

Five in number, the trees planted yesterday were a selection of those presented to the Nova Scotian descendants of New Zealand by the Nova Scotian Government, and comprised different varieties of Canadian woods. Arrangements in connection with the planting of the trees were carried out by the Whangarei Heads School Committee. [...]

As time progressed, it was apt to happen that the younger generation would forget the pioneers and their history, stated the chairman of the central committee responsible for the apportioning of the trees (Mr. J. A. McKay). It was chiefly for this reason that the trees would serve as a perpetual reminder to the Nova Scotian descendants, of the trials and difficulties which their ancestors had emerged victorious, that they had been planted.... The pioneers had not bought a great deal

<sup>53</sup> NZMS 598 Box 11, Folder 2, Auckland Public Library.

<sup>54</sup> N. R. McKenzie, p.89. There were three A. McLeods and two A. McKenzies on the roll.

<sup>55</sup> N. R. McKenzie, p.89

<sup>56</sup> *Northern Advocate*, 16 March 1901, Florence Keene Register, Northland Room, Whangarei Public Library.



of wealth to the Dominion but they had inculcated into the very veins of the country a sense of righteousness, character and fortitude. Mr McKay hoped sincerely that the same character of the pioneers had left its mark on the Dominion. [...]

The trees were then planted by five of the youngest direct descendants of the Nova Scotia clans who were attending or who had attended the Whangarei Heads School. The children were: E. Jagger, M. Vinson, J. McLeod, and Misses J. McGregor and M. McKenzie. Among the inspectors was Murdoch Stuart.<sup>57</sup>

These trees are no longer growing in the school grounds although there have been recent discussions by some participants of the Gaidhealtachd and members of the Whangarei Heads Community as to their replacement. They are not a feature of the Summer School activities. Mr. McKay's remarks in the *Northern Advocate* report identify his concern that the younger generation would forget the pioneers, their history, and in particular the cultural attributes they brought with them. The concept of righteousness, character and fortitude as positive contributions by the Nova Scotian community to 'the Dominion' may have been highlighted because they were compatible with the dominant culture and demonstrate the desire of descendants of the Nova Scotian community to be included as contributing members to this. The words used are also an indication that this event took place in war time.

Although the Gaidhealtachd was not an initiative of Whangarei Heads School, the use of school facilities and the provision of lunches by the School Committee for those camping on the school grounds, has established a strong relationship between the two. The school's significant symbolic importance to the Gaidhealtachd revolves around three issues. Firstly, the fact that it is the longest continuously operated secular settler school in New Zealand has meaning for those who established the Gaidhealtachd and also for those who attend it. This meaning is enhanced by an understanding of the history of the Nova Scotian settlers who established the school, by the connection with this and their own families migration histories from Ireland, Scotland or Wales, and also because it is a school. The Gaidhealtachd is a Celtic Summer School and it is seen as

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<sup>57</sup> *Northern Advocate* September 1944, in Diana McManaway, *Whangarei Heads*, p.39. I have not been able to locate an exact date for this article despite a search of the *Northern Advocate* microfiche catalogue.

appropriate that it should be held at a place which has a long association with education. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, Whangarei Heads School has significant symbolic importance to the Gaidhealtachd because the families who settled in the area and established the school were Gaelic speakers. The identification of the transmission of a culture through language, and the demise of a language with the demise of a culture which was first expressed in the 1940s by T. S. Eliot,<sup>58</sup> is understood by the people of the Gaidhealtachd. Smith states that 'Language is crucial not only for the development of the individual but for the development of a culture',<sup>59</sup> but in this instance it is the preservation of the culture as inherent in the language that is considered important, both to the initial founders of the Gaidhealtachd and to those who have subsequently attended it.

Both Whangarei Heads School and the Whangarei Heads community will celebrate their 150th anniversary during Easter 2007. This date was chosen because it falls between the arrival of the Nova Scotian Scottish settlers to the Heads in 1856 and their establishment of the school in late 1857 or early 1858.

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<sup>58</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, London: Faber & Faber, 1948, pp.54-56.

<sup>59</sup> A. B. Smith, *Understanding Children's Development: A New Zealand Perspective*, Wellington: Bridget Williams, 1998, p.180.

## The Gaidhealtachd

*Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.<sup>60</sup>*



*Gaidhealtachd opening ceremony*

*Photograph: Rhys Evans*

The inaugural Gaidhealtachd took place at Whangarei Heads School between the 2nd - 7th January 1990. It was chosen as the venue because of its establishment by the Gaelic speaking Nova Scotian community, its historic status as the oldest continuously operated settler school and also because the Gaidhealtachd initiators lived in the area. The Scottish word *Gaidhealtachd* and the Irish *Gaeltach* refer to Gaelic speaking areas of both countries and are recognised as the areas where traditional ways survive and are valued. Used in its most general sense to denote a time and place where people can gather to explore and grow in their appreciation of all Celtic traditions, the organisers of the 1990 Gaidhealtachd chose the Scottish orthography because of the history of the Whangarei Heads area.<sup>61</sup>

Distributed through the library and other public venues, the first newsletter in 1989 announcing the Gaidhealtachd's inception, identifies succinctly those whose initiative it

<sup>60</sup> Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Jonathan Rutherford, (ed.), *Identity; Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p.235.

<sup>61</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet.

was, the reasons for its establishment, its founding aims and objectives, and provides evidence of the significance to the founders of Whangarei Heads School.

THE GAIDHEALTACHD  
A CELTIC STUDIES SUMMER SCHOOL  
January 2-7, 1990.

At the historic Whangarei Heads School (Est. 1858).

Principal organisers:

Douglas Chowns: Artist, film maker.

Meg McDiarmid Chowns: Assoc. Member, Imperial Society of Dancing,  
Highland Branch.

Pipe Major Bain McGregor.

Mike Patterson: Journalist, author.

In view of the fact that some 40% of New Zealanders have Celtic roots;  
In view of the general neglect of this Celtic heritage in New Zealand;  
In view of the needs to identify and address cultural values and issues,  
biculturally and multiculturally in contemporary New Zealand;  
In view of the satisfactions and joys to be found in the exploration of one's  
own culture;  
In view of the fact that New Zealand provides a healthy environment for the  
expression of culture,

we are establishing an annual Celtic Studies Summer School to be held in  
the Whangarei area.

Its aims will be to provide a congenial environment for the exchange of  
skills, insights, information and experience that pertain to things Celtic.  
Recognising that Irish, Scots, Cornish, Welsh and other Celtic bloods are  
much admixed in New Zealand, the school will encourage an atmosphere  
that is open and welcoming to all Celtic sources and governed by none.<sup>62</sup>

Identified in the above newsletter as one of the principal organisers, Douglas Chowns is actually considered to be 'the founding father' of the Gaidhealtachd. Asked in recent conversation as to the motivation behind this, his reply was that 'It all began in Hertfordshire', where in the 1950s he and his future wife Meg McDiarmid were members of separate Caledonian Societies.<sup>63</sup> These societies were numerous in England where they provided a focus for Scottish communities, but, with the exception of the

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<sup>62</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Doug and Meg Chowns, McKenzie Bay, Whangarei Heads, July 3, 2006.

Waipu Caledonian Society which was formed in 1870 and held its first celebration and games on New Years Day, 1871,<sup>64</sup> were not present in the north of New Zealand. A possible reason for this could be understood by applying in this context Stephen Constantine's suggestion that the 'proliferation of Caledonian societies [...] surely owed more to the sense of being persecuted minorities in English-dominated Britain than of being so treated in the less English-dominated Greater Britain overseas'.<sup>65</sup> The concept of the Gaidhealtachd could be seen then as an example of the transmission and adaptation of ideas, in that the motivation behind the organisation came mainly from recent immigrants to New Zealand. Constantine identifies the two distinct periods of emigration from Britain as 'roughly the 1880s to 1940, and 1940 to the present'.<sup>66</sup> The former period he describes as primarily an overseas settlement, and the second as having produced experiences more akin to diaspora. He suggests that British immigrants during this period, even in English speaking societies, may have felt surrounded by an alien culture and been aware of differences between them and their new countrymen, thus making them 'perhaps more ready to preserve what they regarded as distinctly British cultural identities and practices, and more aware of their links with and empathy towards the institutions and values of their country of birth'.<sup>67</sup> The concept of Gaidhealtachd however, is very different from any similar organisation either in New Zealand or in Britain as it celebrates the culture, dance, music and art forms of all of the Celtic countries. This is possibly the reason that the existing organisation in the area - the Caledonian Society in Waipu which is based on Scottish culture, did not meet the needs of the founders of the Gaidhealtachd. Moreover, the concept of the Gaidhealtachd is for a summer school which emphasises the 'exchange of skills, insights, information and experience'.<sup>68</sup>

The Gaidhealtachd was not the first cultural group Douglas Chowns has been responsible for establishing as an article entitled "Scotsman's Lament" in the *West Herts Post* of January 1957 testifies. It reports that 'An attempt is being made by a 19 years old Scotsman, Douglas Chowns, to gather in the youngest members of the clans who

<sup>64</sup> G. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth*, p.238.

<sup>65</sup> S. Constantine, 'British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth', C. Bridge, & K. Fedorowich, (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p.24.

<sup>66</sup> S. Constantine, 'British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth' p.19.

<sup>67</sup> S. Constantine, 'British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth' p.19.

live in this area'.<sup>69</sup> This group became 'The Thistle Club', and the venture was successful, as a later article in the same newspaper reports:

People hurrying along The Green, Croxley Green, on Saturday evening on a raw, clammy night, must have asked themselves at times whether their ears were deceiving them. Carried on the wind came the skirl of pipes with occasional "whoops" of excitement. [...] It was a "Ceilidh" run by the Thistle Club, a flourishing group of young Scots who seek to promote interest in their national dances and music.<sup>70</sup>

Douglas's own words demonstrate that, even as a youth, his interest was in the adaptation of cultural forms to make them accessible to as wide a group of people as possible.

We had for years been members of the local West Herts Scottish Society and frequented all the dances within 50 miles so were well known as we were good dancers and were almost unique inasmuch that we wore kilts even on ordinary events or as day wear. We wanted all those other different Caledonian society people we knew to have fun with us in a relaxed atmosphere as in those days the Scottish Societies were very formal and while each did its thing they seldom talked to each other. Typically Scottish and often introvert. Childish even in Skye were little more than the elders sitting around singing in the Gaelic. No dancing in Dunvegan at that time as I discovered (work of the devil!) . Hence my desire then, as now - to free up Ceilidh and to encourage anyone to get up and have a go even though they might not be word or instrument perfect. Maybe that has been my contribution and purpose in life.<sup>71</sup>

The *ceilidh*<sup>72</sup> mentioned above by Doug Chowns and the inference that dancing was the work of the devil display the same influences as those imposed on his community by the Rev. Norman McLeod - he censored songs, enthusiastic spirits, tobacco, and sport.<sup>73</sup> The stern attitude towards behaviour and dress that McLeod was well known for and which may have been responsible for a split within the Nova Scotian community before

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<sup>68</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter 1989, *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>69</sup> *West Herts Post*, Watford, Hertfordshire, January, 1957.

<sup>70</sup> *West Herts Post*, Watford, Hertfordshire April, 1957.

<sup>71</sup> Douglas Chowns, August 30th, 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Plural and singular of *ceilidh* spelt the same.

<sup>73</sup> James McNeish, 'McLeod of Waipu', *New Zealand's Heritage*, Vol. 2 Part 25, Wellington: Paul Hamlin Ltd., 1971, pp.697-690.



they arrived in New Zealand may also explain why so large a number of the Nova Scotian settlers moved to Whangarei Heads shortly after their arrival at Waipu. Although there is no written evidence to substantiate it, and it is not possible to provide a definite answer to the question of a split between members of McLeod's community, that there were divisions is believed by some. This may also in part explain why, although the history of the community at Waipu is well known, that of Whangarei Heads is not.

Doug and Meg emigrated to New Zealand in 1974 and purchased a property in McKenzie Bay at the Heads which was originally owned by Alex McKenzie, one of the first Nova Scotian settlers. Their children attended Whangarei Heads School and the concept of the Gaidhealtachd was inspired by the history of the Whangarei Heads area and reinforced by a visit Doug and Meg made in 1987 to the Gaelic College of St. Ann's on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. St. Ann's College was opened on 26 July, 1939, by Angus MacDonald, the Premier of Nova Scotia with the following words: 'We honour Scotland, we are under a debt to Scotland. That is why we try to pay back that debt by erecting this memorial and by endeavouring to preserve the language, the traditions, the music of our fathers.'<sup>74</sup> The College was founded by the Rev. A. W. R. MacKenzie as a school devoted to the study and preservation of the Gaelic language and Celtic arts and culture. St. Ann's is the only institution of its kind in North America and offers programmes in Scottish traditional disciplines including Gaelic language and song, music, dance and crafts. The creation of some form of offshoot of St. Ann's College was originally considered, and although this didn't eventuate, links between the Gaidhealtachd and the College have been maintained. The influence of St. Ann's Gaelic College on both the concept and the content of the Gaidhealtachd is considerable and provides another example of the transmission of ideas from outside New Zealand and their adaptation to a local situation.

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<sup>74</sup> Marcus Tanner, *The Last of the Celts*, London: Yale University Press, 2004, p.303.



Although the Gaidhealtachd has only been held for seventeen years it pre-dates many of the similar *feis* now held in Scotland and other parts of the world. It differs from these events in that it identifies with, and celebrates the culture of, all of the individual Celtic peoples. It is the only organisation in New Zealand, or possibly anywhere, to do so. The rationale behind the inclusive Celtic ideology was based on the commonality of Scots, Irish and Welsh music, art, history and cultural attributes, and on the need to create a sufficient pool of people to support the organisation of a Summer School. As stated in the first 1989 newsletter it was also in recognition 'that Irish, Scots, Cornish, Welsh and other Celtic bloods are much admixed in New Zealand'.<sup>75</sup>



With very few alterations or changes in direction, the ideology and format of the Gaidhealtachd have remained essentially the same since 1989. The idea was that in keeping with traditional concepts of Celtic hospitality (as related in particularly Irish and Welsh stories, myth and legend), those living at the Heads should "host" this event, while those from outside the area came by (public) invitation. Most of the last sixteen convenors have been residents of Whangarei Heads and members of the "home group". Until 2005 when the Gaidhealtachd became a Trust, all organisation was undertaken by this group of local residents and a convenor and secretary appointed at each Gaidhealtachd for the following year. Similarly, the format established at the first Gaidhealtachd has been altered little. The week begins at midday on January 2 with an opening ceremony,<sup>76</sup> followed by five days of workshops and five evenings of *ceilidh*, and ended with a closing ceremony on January 7. An unusual feature of Gaidhealtachd workshops is that they are all run by participants - in other words those attending share their skills with others. This has also been the constant practice since 1990. This format would seem to be a combination of an interpretation of Celtic tradition (as discussed later), and Celtic/New Zealand egalitarianism. The second Gaidhealtachd Newsletter of September 1989 lists the workshops planned for the inaugural Summer School as the following:

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<sup>75</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*

<sup>76</sup> The format of the opening and closing ceremonies is based on a welcome, blessing, and farewell with the emphasis of these spoken in any of the Celtic languages. While there have been discussions on what might have constituted a 'traditional' Celtic ceremony, what has developed over the last seventeen years, are ceremonies which have become 'traditional' to the Gaidhealtachd.

Celtic history, a rushed overview for beginners.  
 The Celtic languages - an introductory overview.  
 The Highland pipes - an introduction/appreciation session.  
 The Celtic harp - an introduction/appreciation session.  
 Spirituality - an exploration in a Celtic setting.  
 Scottish country dancing - a kick start for beginners  
 Tin whistle workshop.  
 Highland pipes - advanced classes for pipers.  
 Celtic harpers workshop.  
 Scots Gaelic for intermediate speakers - workshop.  
 Highland dancing "learn a new dance".  
 The present day status of the Scots language - a linguist's view.  
 Celtic knotwork art from the beginning.  
 Scots Gaelic singing.  
 Pilbroch - an introduction/appreciation session.  
 "Wither the Gwalli" (Welsh).<sup>77</sup>

While this list has a distinctly Scottish flavour as a result of the resources available to the first organisers, workshops in subsequent years demonstrate an implementation of the inclusive Celtic ideology as people with different skills and knowledge have attended the Gaidhealtachd and have run workshops to share their skills and knowledge with others. Those attending the first Gaidhealtachd in 1990 identified several initiatives for the future. Among these were the *Curragh* Project and a maintenance visit to the Pioneer Cemetery in McLeods Bay. In January 2007 the *curragh*, which has been built in the traditional way using traditional materials over the last few years by those attending the Gaidhealtachd was successfully launched at Taurikura Bay. The development of the *Curragh* project and other initiatives will be discussed in Chapter Three.

A full citation of the quote at the beginning of this section reads: 'The Celtic Diaspora is vast, yet still the clans gather and the inspirational fires are rekindled to warm the children waiting to be reborn'.<sup>78</sup> It is perhaps here that the intentions of the seemingly disparate Whangarei Heads School and the Gaidhealtachd meet. One of the main areas focused on during the Summer School is that of the young people and children

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<sup>77</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>78</sup> Caitlin & John Matthews, *Celtic Wisdom*, p.433.

attending. Workshops and special sessions of dance, music, song and art are always provided and both children and adults are encouraged to perform items at the nightly *ceilidh*. Gaidhealtachd themes have several times in the last few years revolved around the encouragement of the next generations involvement in cultural activities.

For seven days once a year flags representing the Celtic peoples - Scots, Irish, Welsh, Manx, Cornish, and Breton fly above Whangarei Heads School. The classrooms and playing fields reverberate with the sound of music and dancing feet. Although it may very well be true that 'Even the formidable Reverend Norman McLeod failed to shape a community that remained distinctive across the generations',<sup>79</sup> a new community has developed. This community has been formed as a result of a combination of the right people (determined founders), the right time (when issues of cultural identity were being addressed within New Zealand society), and the right place (Whangarei Heads). The Gaidhealtachd community are a diasporic community in that the 'clearly delimited space' which they inhabit for seven days once a year is the homeland of the Gaidhealtachd - Whangarei Heads School.

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<sup>79</sup> Caitlin & John Matthews, *Celtic Wisdom*, p.54.

## Chapter Two:

### New Zealand Celts - an oxymoron?

*'Cultures are disappearing [...] and reappearing in ways we had never imagined'.<sup>1</sup>*

The first Gaidhealtachd newsletter in 1989 describes the Gaidhealtachd as a Celtic Summer School and says, as previously noted, that 'some 40% of New Zealanders have Celtic roots'. Although the newsletter subsequently says that 'Irish, Scots, Cornish, Welsh and other Celtic bloods are much admixed in New Zealand', this description of the Gaidhealtachd as a *Celtic* Summer School, without qualification, implies that the intended readers would have had an understanding of the concept of the Celts, Celtic heritage, and/or Celtic culture. Presently there is much debate internationally about the existence and movement of the 'Celtic Peoples' in antiquity. This is particularly so in Britain where archaeologists, historians and linguists are arguing the case for and against the very existence of the 'insular', or 'Atlantic Celts'. While many of those who attend the Gaidhealtachd may be aware of these arguments, the use of the word Celtic in the 1989 newsletter suggests that at the time there was little debate in New Zealand over either its meaning or its relevance to a large section of the population. This chapter will discuss the concept of Celtic as the key theme underlying a spatially diffuse, temporally different community and will include an overview of the debate surrounding the existence of the insular Celts. It will discuss why the word Celtic was used by the Gaidhealtachd founders, how it was conceived, what it means to those involved, and if this has changed over time. It will also discuss the Celtic element in New Zealand and how this has been influenced by, or differs from, overseas perceptions.

This chapter will also examine the question of Pakeha identity in relationship to the Gaidhealtachd as the 1989 Gaidhealtachd newsletter expresses the need 'to identify and address cultural values and issues, biculturally and multiculturally, in contemporary New Zealand', and the *Gaidhealtachd* booklet states that, 'a founding concept of the Gaidhealtachd is that it is through a deeper understanding of one's own and related

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Sahlins, 'What is Anthropological Enlightenment?': Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 28:xxi.

cultures that one becomes better able to respect the cultures of others'.<sup>2</sup> While these statements do not necessarily indicate that the establishment of the Gaidhealtachd was a response to Maori identity politics and the corresponding process of self-reflection by the Anglo/Celtic majority population in the 1980s, they do indicate an understanding by the founders of the importance of culture and identity in post-colonial New Zealand. This chapter will argue that the Gaidhealtachd is a case study of why and how some people have addressed these issues.

Although some historians argue that properly used the term Celtic refers only to language, and that the idea of an ethnic or cultural Celtic peoples is a dangerous hangover from nineteenth century concepts of race<sup>3</sup>, there is general acceptance that the history of Celtic speaking communities in Europe covers nearly two millennia. The popular understanding is that the expansion of the Roman Empire reduced these communities to those isolated from developments in Europe and Southern Britain - to Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall and Wales, where the language and the memory of Celtic cultural heritage survived.<sup>4</sup> Like Maori, the Celts were without a literary tradition of their own, and were therefore defined solely from outside by Greek writers as *Keltoi*, and Roman as *Celtae*, and these classical constructions of the archetypal Celt have created a powerful, emotive and enduring image.<sup>5</sup> Descriptions of the Celts by Greek and Roman writers in antiquity to describe their barbarian neighbours related solely to continental peoples, while the insular Celts - the Welsh, Scots, Irish and Cornish, have only begun to call themselves and their ancestors Celts since the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup> With reference to the Celtic peoples of the British Isles, James concludes from this that 'the notion of insular Celts, past and present [...] is a modern interpretation and an adopted 'ethnonym' (an ethnic group's name for itself)'.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet.

<sup>3</sup> S. McHardy, 'The Place of the Picts in Celtic Studies', *Pictish Arts Society Newsletter*, November 1996, quoted in J. Megaw & M. R. Megaw 'The Mechanism of (Celtic) Dreams?', *Antiquity* 72 (1998), p.434.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.274.

<sup>5</sup> Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts* p.2.

<sup>6</sup> Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts: Ancient Peoples or Modern Invention?*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999, p.17.

<sup>7</sup> Simon James, p.17.

The name Celtic as applied to the insular Celts, or more accurately to the group of languages spoken by them, was first used by the Welsh scholar Edward Lhuyd (or Lhwyd) in his *Archaeologia Britannica* published in 1707.<sup>8</sup> The *Archaeologia* demonstrated similarities between groups of languages in the British Isles and also their similarity to the extinct language of the Gauls of France.<sup>9</sup> These languages he labelled Celtic. This group of insular Celtic languages was subsequently divided into the two branches still recognised today - Goidelic/Q-Celtic (Irish Gaelic, Scots Gaelic, and Manx), and Brythonic/P-Celtic (Welsh, Cornish and Breton), and although Lhuyd put forward a proposition of prehistoric migration from continental Europe to account for the establishment of these languages in Britain, he did not name the migrants as Celts.<sup>10</sup> The concept of Celtic languages as spoken both in the present and the past by Irish, Welsh, Scots and Cornish peoples in Britain was widely and quickly accepted, as was the description of Celtic as a label for cultural and national identities, also both in the present and the past.<sup>11</sup> David Pearson says that 'Nationality, 'race', and ethnicity are not natural categories or predetermined identities, they are political constructs with shifting memberships and meanings'.<sup>12</sup> While acknowledging that Lhuyd's work was a scholarly achievement, James argues for the Celts as a political construct in that the grounds for a new understanding of the history and cultural/ethnic identity of the non-English in Britain was provided at a time when these peoples were under political and cultural pressure.<sup>13</sup> Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica* was published in 1707, the same year in which the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland created the new political identity of 'British', which, dominated by the more powerful English, threatened non-English individuality with cultural oblivion through assimilation or subjugation.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, at the same time as the word 'Briton', (previously used by the non-English to describe themselves), became a label for all inhabitants of the British Isles, Lhuyd provided "the terminologically dispossessed" with a new name and identity: 'Celtic'.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that the term 'Celtic' in New Zealand has given some Pakeha (the

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<sup>8</sup> Simon James, p.45.

<sup>9</sup> Simon James, p.46.

<sup>10</sup> Simon James, p.46.

<sup>11</sup> Simon James, p.47.

<sup>12</sup> David Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society: States of Unease*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, p.16.

<sup>13</sup> Simon James, p.47.

<sup>14</sup> Simon James, p.48.

<sup>15</sup> Simon James, p.48.

terminologically dispossessed British) a similar identity. Statistics for permanent residents from the 2006 New Zealand census show that while those identifying as European were the largest group at 67%, the category of New Zealander (a separate category for the first time), at 11.1%, was the third largest ethnic group. 10.4% of permanent residents identified with more than one ethnic group, and, as part of the Other category, 1,506 individuals identified themselves as Celtic. As part of this category also, those who could be considered as from the Celtic areas and periphery of the British Isles were as follows: Gaelic 54, Irish 12,651, Scottish 15,039, Welsh 3,774, Orkney Islander 12, Manx 147, Shetland Islander 36, Cornish 108, and Channel Islander 84.<sup>16</sup>

James's argument for the Celts as a political construct has widespread support in Britain. Malcolm Chapman expresses the argument as:

The continuity between the Celts of the Iron Age [...] and the Celts of the modern day, is not a simple continuity of genetic lineage, of culture, race or language. It is rather a continuity of symbolic opposition between a central defining power and its own fringes: this continuity can be, and has been, sustained, regardless of overwhelming changes in the cultural context involved.<sup>17</sup>

But not all agree. The Australian archaeologist and historian, Megaw and Megaw explain this interpretation as a response to the recent re-defining of English identity, to challenges to United Kingdom sovereignty particularly in Northern Ireland, and to separatist movements in Scotland and Wales, all of which make the Celts a possible symbol of internal disintegration and external control.<sup>18</sup>

While the existence and the history of the insular Celts - ancient or modern, could seem to be of little relevance outside of Britain, James maintains otherwise. He points out that millions of people in North America and Australasia come from Celtic homelands and

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census> accessed 28 December 2006

<sup>17</sup> M. Chapman, *The Celts: The reconstruction of a Myth*, Basingstoke; Macmillan, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> J. Megaw & M. R. Megaw 'The Mechanism of (Celtic) Dreams?', *A Partial Response to Our Critics*, *Antiquity* 72 (1998): p.180.



that it is the claim of ancestry by the 'Celtic diaspora' which makes this issue a global one.<sup>19</sup> He also says that while the Ancient Celts in Britain are a modern political construct, the insular Celts of today are 'a real and legitimate ethnic group [who] constitute a true case of 'ethnogenesis' - the birth of an ethnic identity - in *early modern Europe*'.<sup>20</sup> He supports this argument by relating recurrent themes found in the study of ethnic identities to the Irish, Welsh and Scots - identities arising from a shared difference and perceived threat from a neighbouring group, the attachment of symbolic value to common cultural characteristics, the choice of an ethnonym, and the creation of an agreed common history. James concludes however, that it is because millions of people claim Celtic ancestry, or believe themselves to be in some sense Celtic, that the modern insular Celts must be considered a real and legitimate ethnic group.<sup>21</sup>

The earliest use of the word Celtic in New Zealand appears to be in the name of a newspaper called *The New Zealand Celt* which was first published in Hokitika on the 26 October 1867.<sup>22</sup> Edited by John Manning who emigrated to New Zealand from Australia in 1860, the paper strongly supported the cause of Irish nationalism and expressed the empathy of the New Zealand Irish for Irish Fenian nationalists who opposed British rule in Ireland.<sup>23</sup> In this context the word Celtic can be seen as synonymous with the word Irish and this association appears to have been the general understanding of Celtic until the middle of the twentieth century. In the following passage from *Half the World from Home*, Akenson implies that it was specifically the Irish Catholics of Southern Ireland to whom the label Celtic was applied:

This reminds us, firstly, that the largest single religious group in Ulster was Roman Catholic. In ethnic terms they are frequently, if a trifle simplistically, identified with the 'Celtic' Irish.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Simon James, p.19.

<sup>20</sup> Simon James, p.137.

<sup>21</sup> Simon James, p.138.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealandPeoples/Irish/6/en> accessed 14-21 October 2006.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.dnz.govt.nz/JohnManning-1854-1868> accessed 14-21 October 2006.

<sup>24</sup> Donald Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand 1860-1950*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1990, p.72.

A search of the Newztext database found 8814 mentions of Celtic between the years 1980-2006, but none of these were pre 1990, and most of them were articles about sports clubs called Celtic. The few exceptions to this were an article on the *Celtic Connections* shop in Hamilton, an article by musician Cole Brendan from New Plymouth about Celtic music, and a review of Martin Doutre's book, *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*.<sup>25</sup> These items do however demonstrate that after 1990, the word Celtic was understood as coming from, and applied to, all of the insular Celtic countries. While most dictionaries give two meanings for Celt: a member of a division of the early Indo-European peoples distributed from the British Isles and Spain to Asia Minor, and a modern Gael, Highland Scot, Irishman, Welshman, Cornishman, or Breton, the 1966 *Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*<sup>26</sup> lists all references to Celt or Celtic under Irish, which also demonstrates the association in New Zealand until recently of Celtic with Irish. Although Celtic is not a description that many Scots would once have used to describe themselves - the Celticness of Scotland being a contentious issue because of Scotland's formation as a kingdom from the union of several groups which included non Celtic-speaking populations,<sup>27</sup> there was a newsletter published by the New Zealand Branch of the Clan MacLachlan between 1989 - 2001 called *The Celtic Kiwi*.<sup>28</sup> That a Scottish clan should use Celtic to describe themselves is indicative of a change in general understanding of the meaning of the term.

Although there is general consensus that over 90% of New Zealand's immigrants in the nineteenth century came from the British Isles and Ireland,<sup>29</sup> for various reasons there is no way of ascertaining how many migrated to New Zealand from the insular Celtic countries of Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the county of Cornwall. One reason for this is that in 1972 the Department of Statistics destroyed the nineteenth century questionnaires which detailed the original birthplaces of the population since the beginning of comprehensive census taking in 1857.<sup>30</sup> Another is that often immigrants

<sup>25</sup> Martin Doutre, *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*, Auckland: De Dannan Press, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.teara.govt.nz/encyclopaedia/1966> accessed 14-21 October 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Simon James, p.20.

<sup>28</sup> *The Celtic Kiwi: Newsletter of the New Zealand Branch of the Clan MacLachlan*, Hamilton: D. R. McLachlan, 1989-2001, National Library of New Zealand.

<sup>29</sup> Tony Simpson, *The Immigrants: The Great Migration from Britain to New Zealand 1830-1890*, Auckland: Godwit, 1997, p.9.

<sup>30</sup> Tony Simpson, p.8.

came to New Zealand from the British Isles via North America and Australia.<sup>31</sup> A letter from Chief Commissioner Donald McLean to Colonel T. Gore Browne dated 20 March, 1857, describes the Nova Scotian settlement at Waipu and also the desirability of obtaining immigrants from other colonies, particularly those in North America:

At Waipu, about twelve miles from the south head of Whangarei, a party of emigrants from Cape Breton, North America, have formed a settlement, and in the short space of twelve or fourteen months have converted the primitive wastes and forests into comfortable homes and farmsteads. [...] there is every reason to expect that, in a country like New Zealand, which they regard as a comparative paradise, by a continuance of their present industry and perseverance, they will contribute greatly to the material advancement of the province. Thousands of their countrymen would follow these first pioneers from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and other parts of British North America if inducements were held out to them to do so.[...] all that they ask is that we give them land suitable to their requirements. [...] By these means the Government would ensure a steady flow of immigration to the province of well-trained, hardy, and experienced bushmen and sailors; whose loyalty to British authority, joined with their clannish spirit and unanimity of action, would be found most important elements in the formation and early settlement of a new country situated like New Zealand. Such colonists moreover, derive a peculiar value from the manner in which they transplant themselves to these shores, bringing along with them their religious and educational establishments already in operation. [...] Nor ought this opportunity be overlooked by either the general or provisional Governments, lest the stream should be diverted to other colonies, the Cape of Good Hope, for instance, which are fully sensible of its value.<sup>32</sup>

McLean's mention of the colonists from Nova Scotia bringing with them 'their religious and educational establishments already in operation'<sup>33</sup> corroborates the evidence for the early existence of both Waipu and Whangarei Heads schools discussed in the previous chapter.

The Immigration Statement by the Minister of Immigration, Major Atkinson on October 8th, 1875, indicates that while groups like the Nova Scotian community of Norman

<sup>31</sup> Tony Simpson, p.8.

<sup>32</sup> Report from Chief Commissioner Donald McLean to Colonel T. Gore Browne, C. B., Governor, 20 March, 1857, in H. H. Turton, *Epitome of Official Documents Relative to Native Affairs and Land Purchases in the North Island of New Zealand*, Wellington: New Zealand Government, 1883, p.56-57.

<sup>33</sup> H. H. Turton, p.57.

McLeod arrived in New Zealand indirectly from the British Isles, some subsequently moved from New Zealand to other colonies:

It was a very common impression some months ago [...] that we were importing immigrants for the benefit of the other colonies. Now, the fact is that, ever since the Immigration and Public Works policy was fairly initiated, we have been gaining not only from the Australian colonies but also from other parts, in addition to the number of immigrants we received from England - free immigrants of our own. [...] we find a very considerable influx from the neighbouring colonies and from America. The nationality of the immigrants we have bought in is as follows:-

English	.....	34,326
Irish	.....	11,974
Scotch	.....	9,545
Foreigners	.....	<u>5,477</u>
		61,322 <sup>34</sup>

Numbers of migrants continued to enter New Zealand from ports outside of the British Isles. In *Half the World from Home* Donald Akenson provides a Table of Embarkation which shows that for most of the years between 1871-1920 more migrants came to New Zealand from Australia - those born there and those who came from the British Isles after having spent time in Australia - than directly to New Zealand from ports in the British Isles.<sup>35</sup> The main reason for this was that until 1883 there was no direct steamship route to New Zealand.<sup>36</sup>

Atkinson's list demonstrates another problem in identifying migrants of modern Celtic ethnicity in New Zealand, in that most immigration statistics included the Welsh and Cornish with the English because in the British Isles these three areas formed one administrative unit.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the nationality of migrants was usually assessed according to the port of departure which in most cases was somewhere in England. Rosalind McClean gives an example of this for the Scottish migrants. She says that prior to the late 1850s most Scots who migrated directly from a port in the British Isles

<sup>34</sup> Immigration Statement October 8th, 1875, *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1875, D-8, p.2.

<sup>35</sup> Donald Akenson, p.21.

<sup>36</sup> Donald Akenson, p.21.

<sup>37</sup> Donald Akenson, p.7.

to colonies in Australasia left from England, and that during the New Zealand Company period over three-fifths of the Scots emigrants to New Zealand also embarked from an English port.<sup>38</sup> Akenson identifies a similar problem with assessing migrant numbers in regard to the Irish - he says that most Irish did not arrive in New Zealand directly from the British Isles and that those that did, in the main, embarked at an English or Scottish port.<sup>39</sup> While it is impossible to ascertain accurately how many New Zealanders today can claim descent from the insular Celtic countries of Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall and Wales, Patterson's estimate of 450,000 for the Irish alone,<sup>40</sup> indicates that the percentage of immigrants of Celtic ancestry is indeed at least the 'some 40%' of New Zealanders mentioned by the Gaidhealtachd founders in their 1989 newsletter.

The description of the Gaidhealtachd as a Celtic Summer School, and the subsequent use of Celtic throughout the 1989 Gaidhealtachd newsletter, suggests that there was widespread understanding within the New Zealand public of the meaning of Celtic and its cultural and/or ethnic connotations. The Gaidhealtachd founders used Celtic as an ethnonym which was seen to include people of Irish, Scots, Welsh and Cornish descent - their related languages, shared traditions, culture, and history - but which also recognised the differences between them. They chose a pan-Celtic *steidh* (theme) partly because there was already a Scottish organisation in the area (the Waipu Caledonian Society), but mostly because this was seen as a way to attract participants and to make the summer school a viable enterprise.<sup>41</sup> There was also an understanding that cultural and ethnic identity was important to those wishing to attend the Gaidhealtachd and that, while not intended to be interpreted factually, the meaning of the word Celtic was easily understood.<sup>42</sup> Doug Chowns, the 'founding father of the Gaidhealtachd', explains his use of Celtic in an information sheet explaining the recently carved Celtic Pou (column/post) outside the Whangarei Public Library:

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<sup>38</sup> Rosalind McClean, p.143.

<sup>39</sup> Donald Akenson, p.23.

<sup>40</sup> Brad Patterson, (ed.), *Ulster - New Zealand Migration and Cultural Transfers*, Dublin; Four Courts Press Ltd., 2006, p.9.

<sup>41</sup> Doug Chowns interview, McKenzie Bay, 14 September, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Doug Chowns, 14 September, 2006.

The title Celtic is used for want of a more appropriate title as none better exists in this case for a pre-Roman British people. Bronze Age, Neolithic, Beaker, and Urnfield are all in mind but individually make for poor communication. Mesolithic is the period I favour from about 3500 BC. Briefly and by way of explanation; if you are middle aged and your grandparents were born in the British Isles, DNA researchers say that up to 96% of your gene pool is up to 50,000 years old of which the greater part, about 50% (dependent on being Welsh, Scots, English, Irish etc.) is 25,000 years old. This fact demonstrates that we have been existing for a very long time [...] we are indeed an old people. [...] The title 'Celtic fringe nations' established before anything was known or understood about our DNA, and modern popular so called Celtic music, may be the culprits who comfortably and instantly communicate the adopted [Celtic] legacy of the Ancient Britons.<sup>43</sup>

The recognition by the Gaidhealtachd founders that Irish, Scots, Cornish, Welsh and other Celtic bloods are blended in New Zealand<sup>44</sup> provides further evidence of the ethnonym Celtic as a convenient term to describe New Zealanders of insular Celtic descent. Most who attend the Gaidhealtachd can claim ancestry from one or more of these areas, and most of those who regularly attend agree that their understanding of Celtic as regards their own ancestry is that it denotes descent from the people of the insular Celtic countries.<sup>45</sup> This provides possible answers to both the question of why the inclusive Celtic ideology was, and still is, attractive to participants, and also the question of what the Gaidhealtachd provides for people which other existing groups (Irish/Welsh Clubs or Caledonian Societies for instance), do not. While the above organisations give members the opportunity to be part of cultural activities such as music, dance and other traditions inherited from their ancestors, for many New Zealanders these groups cater for only one aspect of their heritage. By adopting an inclusive policy which 'will encourage an atmosphere that is open and welcoming to all Celtic sources and governed by none',<sup>46</sup> the Gaidhealtachd has addressed this issue. For seven days every year the diasporic space of Whangarei Heads School therefore becomes the point of conjecture for the disparate strands of the Celtic diaspora.

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<sup>43</sup> Doug Chowns, May 2006.

<sup>44</sup> Gaidhealtachd newsletter, 1989

<sup>45</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans interview 30 October 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Gaidhealtachd newsletter, 1989.



James Baldwin says that 'Music is our witness, and our ally. The beat is the confession which recognises, changes and conquers time. Then, history becomes a garment we can wear and share, and not a cloak in which to hide; and time becomes a friend'.<sup>47</sup> Although Baldwin is referring to black African-American music his statement is equally applicable to the music of the Celtic peoples. Tanner points out that with the virtual demise of the Gaelic language in Nova Scotia today, it is the music which has survived and flourished and which is the last visible remnant of the distinctive Nova Scotian culture and of the Gaelic language.<sup>48</sup> Music has played a large part of Gaidhealtachd workshops for the last seventeen years and has been the underlying force behind some of the changes in the way in which music and dance are experienced. Initially the music which accompanied Welsh, Irish and Scottish dance workshops was provided by cassette tape. Over the years, as musicians gained confidence and skills from workshops at the Gaidhealtachd and from the company and support of other musicians, the music for dance workshops has increasingly become 'live' - provided by Gaidhealtachd musicians. This is also true for the nightly *ceilidh* where the *Gaidhealtachd Ceilidh Band* provides the music for all dances and has had the effect of bringing musicians and dancers into closer communication and correspondingly allowed for a 'more real' experience. Music has also been responsible for a broader understanding of the Celtic 'fringe' countries with the incorporation of Breton and Galatian music and dance into the Gaidhealtachd programme. The incorporation of a broad interpretation of Celtic music has provided the chance for musicians to discover the commonalities between the music of different cultures, to explore both traditional and contemporary music, and to keep alive traditional ways of playing and instruments while also fostering creativity.<sup>49</sup> The interest of the people of the Gaidhealtachd would seem to contravene James Belich's suggestion that Pakeha New Zealanders are a 'people without songs'.<sup>50</sup>

Simon James says that music could be the most widely appreciated modern manifestation of Celtic cultural traditions today 'both for its inherent qualities and

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Paul Gilroy, 'It Ain't Where You're From, It's Where You're At: The Dialectics of Diasporic Identification', Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999, p.280.

<sup>48</sup> Marcus Tanner, *The Last of the Celts*, London: Yale University Press, 2004, p.310.

<sup>49</sup> Jackie Davidson interview 25 November, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.325.



because language is no barrier to its appreciation'.<sup>51</sup> The world-wide proliferation of Celtic bands and the popularity of Celtic music in the 1980s is one way of explaining why, at the time of the Gaidhealtachd's establishment and the 1989 promotional newsletter, it could be assumed that the concept of Celtic would be understood and have relevance to a considerable section of the New Zealand population. While for some the understanding of Celtic may have been limited to the dance show *Riverdance* and the beer Guinness, artists such as *Enya*, *The Chieftains*, *The Pogues*, and *Clannad* were widely popular, as were Irish themed pubs such as the '*Dogs Bollix*' on Newton Road in Auckland. The *Pogues* played in Wellington in 1987 and the Irish band *U2* made two visits to New Zealand in the 1980s which helped to raise the profile of Celtic music. The incorporation of live 'Celtic' (usually Irish) music in most of the themed pubs provided an outlet for musical experimentation by musicians and an atmosphere which was understood by patrons as both traditional and also in some sense related to their own cultural heritage. In addition to live performances in themed pubs and productions like *Riverdance* which incorporated both music and dance, insular Celtic music was used for the sound track of popular movies with a Celtic (usually Scottish) theme such as *Highlander*, *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*.

Although the widespread popularity of Celtic music and movies such as *Braveheart* can be associated with the understanding of Celtic as a cultural concept in New Zealand, the documentary series *The Celts*,<sup>52</sup> (and the accompanying book), which featured the music of *Enya* (Ireland's best known solo artist and the worlds biggest selling female artist in 2001 and 2002),<sup>53</sup> on New Zealand television in the late 1980s may be responsible for firstly, the process by which many New Zealanders learned of the history of the Celtic peoples as it was perceived then, and secondly, the recognition of their own relationship to it. The documentary explained the history and migration movements of the Celts both past and present and the many destinations of the Celtic diaspora (although this term was not used), including New Zealand. Examples of the rich literary traditions of the Celtic peoples and the portrayal of the Celts as gifted artisans in this documentary increased many peoples understanding of what, aside from music, constituted Celtic culture. It may also have been responsible for an increase in

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<sup>51</sup> Simon James, p.22.

<sup>52</sup> *The Celts; Rich Traditions and Ancient Myths*, Scotland: BBC, 1987.

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.enya.com> accessed 12 February, 2007.

the desirability of 'all things Celtic', (especially jewellery), and, by extension, the number of Celtic themed shops which made an appearance in New Zealand in the 1980s. Use of the Celtic theme as a commercial concept has proved successful. Aside from the Celtic themed pubs and shops, Guinness, tartan biscuit tins, and TV advertisements of young men in kilts selling Scotch Oats, the economic revival of Ireland, known as 'The Celtic Tiger', was seen as an example, often cited by politicians in the 1980s as one that perhaps New Zealand could emulate, of the ability of a small nation to survive in a global economy. A recent book titled *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*<sup>54</sup> is evidence that the concept of Celtic is understood to a degree in New Zealand which makes it marketable. As it is difficult to decipher in what way 'Ancient Celtic' and 'New Zealand' relate to each other in this book, apart from the stone works which are similar to those in the British Isles (although these are actually pre-Celtic), one can only assume that 'Ancient Celtic' is used in the title as a selling point. Both in New Zealand and overseas the market for Celtic themed books, particularly those dealing with myth, legend and anything spiritual, has remained large.

The perception of Celtic identity within the New Zealand population in the 1980s was largely created, and therefore influenced, by the 'Celtic revival' in the British Isles and Europe. This 'revival' was initially a literary one and was based on the recognition of traditional forms of Irish literature. An online encyclopaedia gives the following explanation of the Celtic Revival, and although this encyclopaedia is a notably unreliable information source it is a commonly accessed one and its presentation of the Celtic Revival would have informed the understanding of a large number of people.

The Celtic Revival, also known as the Irish Literary Revival, was begun by Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn and William Butler Yeats in Ireland in 1896. The Revival stimulated new appreciation of traditional Irish literature. The movement also encouraged the creation of works written in the spirit of Irish culture, as distinct from English culture. This was, in part, due to the political need for an individual Irish identity. Figures such as Yeats, J. M. Synge and Sean O'Casey wrote many plays and articles about the political state of Ireland at the time. These were connected with another great symbol of the literary revival, The Abbey Theatre, which served as the stage for many new Irish writers and playwrights of the time.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Martin Doutre, *Ancient Celtic New Zealand*, Auckland: De Dannan Press, 1999.

<sup>55</sup> <http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Celticrevival> accessed 21-28 September 2006.

The recognition of traditional forms of Irish literature led to the appreciation of other aspects of traditional Irish culture and to that of all the Celtic countries. It is possible that this description of the Irish Literary Revival as a Celtic Revival was responsible for a general acceptance of the word Celtic as defined earlier - as a member of a division of the early Indo-European peoples distributed from the British Isles and Spain to Asia Minor, and a modern Gael, Highland Scot, Irishman, Welshman, Cornishman, or Breton, rather than as a description of the Catholic Irish.

While the understanding of Celtic music, artwork, and history was similar in New Zealand to other places, there were significant differences between New Zealanders and others in the way in which this was applied to an understanding of themselves and their personal histories. In New Zealand, to be of Celtic descent was generally perceived as having ancestry in one or more of the insular Celtic countries of the Celtic diaspora - it was an inclusive term. In the British Isles, while the term Celtic is used to denote difference from English neighbours and recognise an underlying cultural and linguistic unity, personal identity is usually regional - Welsh first and Celtic second, for example. Furthermore, although the history of the Celts in the British Isles was, until recently, accepted without question, the term Celtic is not universally accepted or applied. In Ireland Celtic is sometimes used as a synonym for the 'indigenous Irish'.<sup>56</sup> (In a similar manner Celtic was used in early New Zealand to describe the Catholic immigrants from Ireland).<sup>57</sup> Celtic is not a term widely used in Scotland - the Celticness of Scotland is a contentious issue because of Scotland's formation as a kingdom from the union of several groups which included non Celtic-speaking populations.<sup>58</sup> As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was the label of Celtic for a group of similar languages spoken by the insular Celtic peoples which was the precursor for the use Celtic as a cultural and ethnic term. An awareness of the importance of the preservation of these languages and the maintenance and development of the accompanying literary traditions has provided the individual peoples of the British Isles with a stronger sense of national consciousness and a sense of continuity which is distinctly different from those of their

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<sup>56</sup> Simon James, p.20.

<sup>57</sup> Donald Akenson, p.72.

<sup>58</sup> Simon James, p.20.

English neighbours.<sup>59</sup> That the founders of the Gaidhealtachd were aware of the connection between Celtic language and culture is demonstrated by the inclusion of workshops related in some way to language in the programme of the first Gaidhealtachd in 1990 (five of the sixteen workshops offered),<sup>60</sup> but this is not an indication that the perception of Celtic as applied to an understanding of themselves and their personal histories by most New Zealanders was a linguistic one. In the same way that Celtic was interpreted by many as an inclusive term for the insular Celts, New Zealand identity was understood to *include* descent from the insular Celtic countries where applicable. To the Irish, Welsh, Scots and Cornish, Celtic identity differentiated them from the majority population, while in New Zealand ancestry from one or more of the insular Celtic countries was seen to be part of the majority population, albeit 'living inside with a difference'.<sup>61</sup>

David Pearson's conception of nationality, race, and ethnicity as political constructs rather than natural categories or predetermined identities<sup>62</sup> provides an understanding of the major difference between the interpretation of Celtic in New Zealand and the British Isles and of the meaning this has for people. The publication of Lhuyd's *Archaeologia Britannica* in 1707, the same year as the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland, and the recent re-defining of English identity, challenges to United Kingdom sovereignty particularly in Northern Ireland, and separatist movements in Scotland and Wales which make the Celts a possible symbol of internal disintegration and external control - issues which are fuelling the current debate over the existence of the insular Celts - explain why the concept of Celtic in the British Isles can be considered a political one. These issues were not seen as important to most people outside of the British Isles so in what way can Celtic as a political construct be applied in the context of 1980s New Zealand?

There are two ways of answering this question, both of which relate to the concept of New Zealand identity. The first can be traced to the joining of Britain to the European

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<sup>59</sup> Simon James, p.22.

<sup>60</sup> Workshop list for Gaidhealtachd 1990, *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>61</sup> James Clifford, p.221.

Economic Community. The feeling that by becoming part of Europe Britain had divorced itself from a global sense of Britishness which had given New Zealanders their identity was voraciously and continuously expressed by J. G. A. Pocock.<sup>63</sup> In an article in the *New Zealand Journal of History* in 1974,<sup>64</sup> he called for the introduction of a new subject - 'British History', which would address the problems of identity raised by Britain's entry into the European Economic Community and also the problem of Britishness for the nineteenth and twentieth century British diaspora.<sup>65</sup> Pocock subsequently explained that his article was:

... composed and delivered after the great divorce which occurred when you [the British] told us that you were now Europeans, which we as New Zealanders were not ... What you did of course, was irrevocably and unilaterally to disrupt a concept of Britishness which we had supposed that we share with you ... In effect, you threw your identity, as well as ours, into a condition of contingency, in which you have to decide whether it is possible to be both British and European ..., while we have to decide in what sense if any we continue to be British or have a British history.<sup>66</sup>

Debates in New Zealand over the effects of Britain's membership of the European Economic Community were largely economic ones, but 'the condition of contingency' into which Pocock says New Zealand identity was placed demonstrates that there were wider issues involved. Belich sees this time as the beginning of New Zealand's independence and the end of the period of 'recolonisation'.<sup>67</sup> Cohen says that diasporic communities (including the British 'imperial' diaspora) recognise that their ancestral home has some claim on their loyalty and emotions which is illustrated by acknowledgement of their migration history and co-ethnicity with others of a similar background.<sup>68</sup> Immigrants to New Zealand from the British Isles were encouraged to consider themselves as 'better British', and New Zealand as 'Better' or 'Greater Britain', all of which implied a reproduction, albeit a superior one, of the 'mother country' of

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<sup>62</sup> David Pearson, p.16.

<sup>63</sup> Neville Meaney, 'Britishness and Australia: Some Reflections', in C. Bridge, & K. Fedorowich, (eds.), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003, p124.

<sup>64</sup> J. G. Pocock, 'British History: A Plea For a New Subject', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 8 (1974), pp.3-21.

<sup>65</sup> Neville Meaney, pp.123-124.

<sup>66</sup> Pocock, cited in Neville Meaney, p.123.

<sup>67</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp.429-435. On page 29 of *Paradise Reforged* Belich defines 'Recolonisation' as his term for a renewal and reshaping of links between colony and metropolis after an earlier period of colonisation.

<sup>68</sup> Robin Cohen, p.ix.



Britain.<sup>69</sup> According to Gibbons 'Belief in the superiority of the British people and development of myths about the selection of the original immigrant stock provided most European New Zealanders with a collective identity'.<sup>70</sup> Examination of the understanding of this collective identity as basically a British one may have begun, as Keith Sinclair has suggested, during the Boer War,<sup>71</sup> but the call by Pocock for a new subject of 'British History', and the perceived betrayal of the British colonies following Britain's membership of the European Economic Community has had an effect on the historiographical analysis of New Zealand's colonial past. Some historians, by developing a pluralist approach, have focused on those who have been marginalised by nationalist, or British, history.<sup>72</sup> This has required an examination of the interplay of relations between the British, or Anglo-Celtic (a term used by both Belich and Pearson), imperial diaspora and indigenous minorities and the construct of New Zealand identity as the result of the way which the majority population has defined itself in relation to indigenous and immigrant minorities.<sup>73</sup> As well as an examination of the interplay of relations between the British imperial diaspora and indigenous minorities, 'the condition of contingency' in which New Zealand identity was placed also resulted in the deconstruction of singular British identity into its component parts - the British imperial diaspora became an Anglo-Celtic one, and the British became English, Irish, Scots, and Welsh. It is in the understanding of this process that a second reason for Celtic as a political construct can be applied to the context of 1980s New Zealand. The deconstruction of a singular British, or Pakeha,<sup>74</sup> ethnic identity allowed for the reconstruction of old identities and the potential of independence from an imperial colonial past, while its possible reflection in government policy towards multiculturalism could at the same be interpreted as a tool of those who feared the empowerment of Maori in a bicultural climate.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>69</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp.297-304.

<sup>70</sup> P.J. Gibbons, "The Climate of Opinion", in Keith Sinclair (Ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of New Zealand*, (pp. 185-209). Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990.

<sup>71</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1986, pp.125-136.

<sup>72</sup> Neville Meaney, p.124.

<sup>73</sup> D. Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society* p.16.

<sup>74</sup> The word Pakeha has been substituted for British as it is more appropriate for the time and the context of the discussion and less unwieldy than the only other useful term - European New Zealander.

<sup>75</sup> D. Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society*, p.152.

Since the 1970s there has been considerable debate in New Zealand over these issues and in particular over the question of the socio-cultural attributes and identity of the majority Anglo/Celtic population group.<sup>76</sup> As part of the fall out after the 1981 protests against the tour of New Zealand by a rugby team from apartheid South Africa, the bifurcation of Maori and Pakeha political and cultural interests necessitated the process of critical self-reflection by Pakeha. Debate has largely centred around the use of the word Pakeha, and whether any such thing as Pakeha ethnicity or culture exists.<sup>77</sup> The claim by Maori that a bicultural nation was a contradiction in terms if only one party (Maori) could define their culture, presented Pakeha with the challenge not of 'what is a New Zealander?', but of 'what is Pakeha?', or more specifically, 'what is Pakeha culture?' Issues of cultural continuity and development as well as those of sovereignty required Pakeha to determine means and objectives for social and political change with reference to their own culture, so that in partnership common goals could be achieved. Maori identity politics, then, were a motivating force in the search for Pakeha identity, and an indication that this identity was to be defined in cultural terms. But where and how was this cultural identity to be discovered?

A possible answer is given by Bernard Cohn: "The reason an anthropologist studies history is that it is only in retrospect, after observing the structure and its transformations, that it is possible to know the nature of the structure".<sup>78</sup> This maxim can be applied equally to issues of cultural identity - in other words, the key to the understanding of Pakeha culture is in the study of its history. While processes of decolonisation in New Zealand and elsewhere have produced a chance for the assertion of indigenous cultural identities previously suppressed, and a corresponding assessment of the ideologies of dominant colonising societies, studies have shown that many majority groups believe they are without a culture.<sup>79</sup> In the context of New Zealand in the 1980s this could either be because, although everyone has a culture only some

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<sup>76</sup> D. Pearson, Pakeha Ethnicity: Concept or Conundrum: *Sites* 18, 1989.

<sup>77</sup> P. Spoonley, D. Pearson, and C. Macpherson, *Nga Take: Ethnic Relations and Racism in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1991.

<sup>78</sup> Bernard Cohn quoted in Marshall Sahlins, 'Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History', *Journal of Modern History*, 1993, 65:1-25, p.1.

<sup>79</sup> Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous Politics and Ethnic Relations in New Zealand*, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1999.



people are ethnically aware of it,<sup>80</sup> or, as mentioned in the 1989 Gaidhealtachd newsletter, because of a general neglect of (in this case Celtic) culture and heritage by the majority population group in New Zealand.<sup>81</sup>

While there is no direct evidence to suggest that the Gaidhealtachd was established in response to Maori identity politics and the corresponding process of self-reflection by Pakeha in the 1980s, the statement in the 1989 newsletter of the need 'to identify and address cultural values and issues, biculturally and multiculturally, in contemporary New Zealand', indicates an understanding by the founders of the importance of culture and identity. The establishment of a *Celtic* Summer School was an answer to the perceived neglect of Celtic culture and heritage in New Zealand and the statement that satisfaction and joy were to be found in the exploration of ones own culture<sup>82</sup> an indication that the Gaidhealtachd was to be a celebration of this culture. How the exploration and the celebration of Celtic culture was achieved by the Gaidhealtachd Summer School will be discussed in Chapter Three.

As well as the recognition of the need to address cultural values and issues as stated in the 1989 newsletter, the Gaidhealtachd 1998 booklet mentions that, 'a founding concept of the Gaidhealtachd is that it is through a deeper understanding of one's own and related cultures that one becomes better able to respect the cultures of others'.<sup>83</sup> The results of a Social Anthropology fieldwork project conducted in 2004 suggest that those who have regularly attended the Gaidhealtachd Summer School have not only gained an understanding of cultural values and issues - both of their own culture and that of others, but also indicates the meaning that this has had for them. The participants were asked if awareness of their cultural background and history was part of their upbringing, and if not, what led them to become involved with Celtic cultural activities, how this has affected their conception of themselves, whether identification with Celtic identity changed or conflicted with their identity as New Zealanders, and whether knowledge of

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<sup>80</sup> D. Pearson, 'Pakeha Ethnicity: Concept or Conundrum', *Sites* 18, 1989.

<sup>81</sup> Gaidhealtachd newsletter, 1989.

<sup>82</sup> Gaidhealtachd newsletter, 1989.

<sup>83</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet.

their own cultural traditions affected their understanding of the traditions of others. One participant gave the following response to these questions:

With the arrival of my uncle to live with us when I was nine I began learning about the Celts and Celtic history, community, etc. a great deal, and he particularly inspired me. My grandmother was very vigilant on family genealogy, so it was more through sporadic connection with her that I learned about my Scottish ancestry. This was complemented by my uncles rabid interest in all things Celtic, which made me believe I was part of a wide, even world-wide community of somewhat displaced Celts. I felt through my family's knowledge that I belonged to something greater. I consider my families involvement not the main reason why I pursued Celtic things, however. I played classical violin for a few years as a child, and attended a festival where I saw people playing in an Irish style. I was mesmerised! It made total sense to learn fiddle like that. It was through my pure love of the music that I travelled overseas to Celtic sites of interest, to play music with Scots and Irish and Cape Bretoners and learn about my heritage fully. It's affected me greatly. I left school at 14 in order to study by correspondence and save to travel overseas and learn music and see the Celtic landscape for myself. Much of my life has revolved around going to events and planning events for people to come together to make music and dance and talk about things. It's made me a more open and generous person I think, because the word gift takes a different meaning - someone singing for you or asking you to stay in their house because you are a musician, telling you great stories of their families and their lives ... that becomes very precious and I'm very thankful to have such an opportunity to know people I never would have because of my cultural choices. I first attended [The Gaidhealtachd] with my uncle, with the idea to learn more music. I suppose I think it's very important to cultivate what truly moves you and what inspires your curiosity, and for me and so many others, they can relate to having a small tight knit community of like minded individuals, if only for a week! I believe a New Zealand Celt can actually be a wonderful hybrid, what with having to deal with a new environment yet holding onto the firm traditions of the forebears countries. I am, in opinion and values, very much a New Zealander, which I am actually very glad of. It's wonderful to be able to have both. Yes, I think I definitely have more respect of other cultures and the importance of maintaining them. I find myself looking at the whole of the culture, and how everything affects everything else - ie language and music, mythology, food, mannerisms, environment. They all contribute to each other and that's what makes cultural study so fascinating. I believe there is a great future for Celtic things here in NZ, handled correctly and with people in mind. Things like the Summer School are enormously important, because they provide a means for the people that are just starting out or just discovering about their heritage. In fact, it doesn't actually need to be your direct heritage, because it represents a thing that runs through all cultures, everybody coming together to preserve something and having a great time doing it. Essentially culture is life, and it's how it kept people alive and happy with each other, so I think New Zealand is taking some great steps into bringing people together again, so far from "home."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Louise Evans, Social Anthropology 303 Fieldwork Project, Massey University, 2004, pp.9-15.

Although a much fuller description than supplied by most participants of how attendance at the Gaidhealtachd has impacted on their life, this particular testimony was typical of the response given by others. Another participant expressed the way in which her sense of identity has been affected by an understanding of Celtic culture:

I first went to the Gaidhealtachd as an official photographer. I found I enjoyed it so much and identified so strongly with the culture that I've returned ever since. Its been good to have knowledge of and a stronger sense of an identity which I feel justified in claiming as mine. Growing up in New Zealand in a predominately Maori school - being classified as a Pakeha (non-Maori) I found I felt a slightly lesser person because I didn't have an equally strong culture/identity behind me - or more importantly - knowledge of that culture. It definitely doesn't conflict with my New Zealand identity. It contributes to it. I now see New Zealanders as a great mixture - a constantly changing, evolving culture. There are plenty of key stages and icons within that culture, but it will always be changing. I don't think it has changed my understanding [of other cultures] but I am more aware of similarities between all early cultures and their traditions.<sup>85</sup>

These statements are examples of a general consensus among the participants of the Research Project and indicate that the theme of Celtic as the key concept underlying a spatially diffuse, temporally different community has provided a context through which issues of identity can be examined. The Celtic Summer School at Whangarei Heads School, (the 'Homeland' of the Gaidhealtachd), has supplied for the descendants of those of the Celtic diaspora who left the British Isles in order to 'find home in a new location',<sup>86</sup> a venue at which this can be achieved. The Gaidhealtachd can be considered then, as an example of why and how some people have addressed issues of cultural and ethnic identity in post-colonial New Zealand.

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<sup>85</sup> Lindsey Davidson, Social Anthropology 303 Fieldwork Project, Massey University, 2004, pp.9-15.

<sup>86</sup> Rosalind McClean, p.145.

### Chapter Three

#### Practices: The Creation of a Cultural Community

*Symbols do not so much express meaning as give us the capacity to make meaning.*<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter has discussed the theme of Celtic as the key concept underlying a spatially diffuse, temporally different community as the context through which issues of identity can be examined. It has argued that the Gaidhealtachd has supplied a venue at which this can be achieved. Chapter Three will demonstrate how this has been accomplished, how the theme of Celtic has provided the fundamental context through which the Gaidhealtachd as a cultural community has been created, sustained and has developed, and the meanings that this has for those involved. Discussion of the practices of the Gaidhealtachd will be divided into three sections. The first section will examine the practical organisation of the Gaidhealtachd Summer School. The second section will examine the progress of initiatives and activities which were either identified by the early Gaidhealtachd participants or which are related in some way to the history of the Whangarei Heads area and the Nova Scotian settlers. The third will discuss the ceremonies and activities which can be seen as the creating of 'Gaidhealtachd traditions'. It will be argued that all these practices form the basis on which the Gaidhealtachd as a cultural community has been formed, maintained, and developed. This chapter will make extensive use of evidence as demonstrated by the material culture of the Gaidhealtachd - that is the contents of the *Gaidhealtachd* Scrapbook, the 1998 *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, the *Gaidhealtachd Memorial Church Service Programme*, and newsletters covering the years 1989 - 2006.

In its discussion of the Gaidhealtachd community, this chapter will be following the definition of community as defined by Anthony Cohen in *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Cohen presents an argument for the centrality of the symbolic dimension of community as its defining characteristic and how an emphasis on the meaning of community as a system of values and moral codes, gives its members a sense of identity within a bounded whole.<sup>2</sup> He suggests that one understanding of community is that it is

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Chichester: Ellis Horwood Ltd, 1985, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.9.

comprised of people who have something in common with each other and that this similarity differentiates them in some significant way from members of other groups, thus signifying both similarity and difference.<sup>3</sup> That this concept of community is understood to denote difference implies that community is in some way bounded - that it has a boundary which separates it from other groups. Cohen says that this boundary may be geographical, linguistic, religious, cultural or symbolic (the boundary as a mental construct) and that the symbolic boundary of community is the meaning invested in it by its individual members.<sup>4</sup> Community, says Cohen, is therefore a boundary-expressing symbol which is both held in common by its members but which the understanding of differs according to the meaning attached to it by individual members.<sup>5</sup> Because of these differing perceptions, Cohen argues that 'the consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols. [...] The reality and efficacy of the community's boundary - and therefore the community itself - depends upon its symbolic construction and embellishment'.<sup>6</sup> Community need not be understood then as uniformity, but rather as a commonality of form (ways of behaving) and content (meaning)<sup>7</sup> which allows for differences among members, because, although the meaning attached to a communities symbols may be interpreted in different ways by different people, the symbols themselves remain the same.<sup>8</sup> Cohen concludes by saying that by making it a resource and a repository of meaning and a referent of their identity, people construct community symbolically and that the reality of community lies in its members perception of the vitality of its culture.<sup>9</sup>

Cohen's argument for the understanding of community as encompassing both similarity and difference, and of its provision for members of a sense of identity within a bounded whole, can be applied to the Gaidhealtachd Summer School. As previously noted, the Gaidhealtachd is a bounded community - bounded spatially by its 'homeland' of Whangarei Heads School, temporally, by the annual seven day period 2-7 January, and symbolically by the key concept of Celtic ancestry, art, music, dance, and identity. The

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<sup>3</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.12.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.12.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.15.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.15.

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.21.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.118.



Celtic theme is the commonality of form and its content, as meaning, can be interpreted differently according to each individual's perception. The inclusive Celtic *steidh* of the Gaidhealtachd allows for a commonality of understanding of Celtic (as referring to the similarity of traditions, history and language for example), and for the recognition of the differences between them (Irish, Welsh, Scottish), as well as for the individual interpretation of meaning. This chapter will discuss the practices of the Gaidhealtachd in relationship to the concept of a temporally different, spatially diffuse bounded community.

### **Temporal Boundary: Practical Organisation**

The Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School is held every year held between the 2nd - 7th January. This is its temporal boundary. If the aim, as expressed in the 1989 newsletter 'to provide a congenial environment for the exchange of skills, insights, information and experience that pertain to things Celtic', is to be achieved during this time, an organisational framework is needed. Apart from minor variations, the programme as established at the first Gaidhealtachd by the founders has altered little. As noted, most years the Summer School is opened with a ceremony at 12 midday on the 2nd January, workshops are held during the day, *ceilidhs* in the evening at Taurikura Hall - (with the exception of one evening put aside for a communal meal and the 'Celtic War game'),<sup>10</sup> and the week is ended by a closing ceremony on the 7th January.<sup>11</sup> Space is also made in the programme for special activities such as the climbing of Mt. Manaia or a trip to the Pioneer Cemetery at McLeod Bay.<sup>12</sup> While an organisational framework is needed for a successful Summer School, as explained in the 1998 booklet, the Gaidhealtachd does not consider itself an organisation.

The Gaidhealtachd is not a club or organisation. It is a coming together of people with common interests, at the invitation of the Whangarei Heads Community and the Gaidhealtachd's founders. [...] The organisation is loose, with individuals being encouraged to contribute to the best of their ability in the areas best matched by their skills and energy. [...] Peculiar to the Gaidhealtachd are its informal

<sup>10</sup> To be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>11</sup> To be discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> To be discussed later in this chapter.



structure and protocol of "invitation". Participants are not "members" because there is no membership structure. The Gaidhealtachd is a movement, or principle - something to be sought or believed in or hoped for [...] so those attending have the rights and responsibilities of guests in a host's place.<sup>13</sup>

While the Gaidhealtachd may not initially have considered itself an organisation with a formal membership structure, increasingly over the last seventeen years strong informal protocols have been put in place. These relate in the main to organisational factors such as the cleaning of the venue and the supplying of day to day items (such as milk) at the school. Initially the running of the Summer School was the responsibility of the convenor aided by volunteers who rostered themselves to perform these tasks, and while this process is still in place, the larger numbers attending in recent years has required a team to make sure everything runs smoothly. This team is again voluntary and is basically comprised of those who have attended the Gaidhealtachd for a number of years and know what is needed, and who liaise with the convenor. The *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* definition of 'group' which states that 'a group is a social system involving regular interaction among members and a common group identity'<sup>14</sup> could be applied to the Gaidhealtachd. The concept of a group rather than that of an organisation suits better the way in which the people of the Gaidhealtachd see themselves in that while a group implies a sense of shared identity and a boundary between those who belong and those who do not, it also allows for a less restrictive definition of how members are linked, the reasons they participate in group activities, and how strong their attachment to the group is. The *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology* points out that the group is an important sociological concept because groups play an important part in social life and that group membership is an important part of an individual's social identity. The dictionary concludes that because it is within groups that the most important social activities take place and that 'attention to how groups work is thus essential for a full understanding of social life'.<sup>15</sup> It is possible that it is through a focus on the informal processes of groups such as the Gaidhealtachd that a clearer understanding of the formation of New Zealand identities could be explained.

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<sup>13</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet.

<sup>14</sup> A. G. Johnson, *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology*, Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2000, pp.138-139.

There have been two changes in the organisational framework of the Gaidhealtachd in recent years. Firstly, until 1996, the convenor (responsible for the day to day management of the Summer School, the production of newsletters, and planning of workshops), and the secretary (responsible for registration, and the booking of camp sites and lunches), were residents of Whangarei or Whangarei Heads. It was felt that in order to accomplish the tasks required to ensure the smooth running of the Gaidhealtachd the convenor and secretary needed to live locally.<sup>16</sup> However, the organisational framework established in the early years of the Summer School has made it possible for the Gaidhealtachd to be facilitated from further afield (Auckland, Hamilton and Kohukohu), thus spreading the task of convenor among a larger group of people. The second change is that in 2004 the Gaidhealtachd became a legally registered charitable trust - the New Zealand Gaidhealtachd Trust.

The Gaidhealtachd is now a legally registered charitable trust – the New Zealand Gaidhealtachd Trust. This means that we are eligible to apply for grants for special projects or events. This would enable us, for example, to establish a scholarship to send a young person to a Gaelic language event or pursue some music training, which would then be brought back to the Gaidhealtachd and will add another dimension to the summer school.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of the Gaidhealtachd as a trust does not appear to have altered the programming or organisational framework of the Summer School in any major way although it does suggest an awareness that, at least for some purposes, the Gaidhealtachd does need to appear as an organisation with some individuals exercising a degree of responsibility. In a sense, the Gaidhealtachd, like its members, would appear itself to have a multiple identity - both that of group/community and, for reasons such as funding applications, that of an organisation.

One of the contributions made by participants to the Summer School programme, as mentioned in chapter one, is that all workshops are given by some of those attending. This means that workshops vary each year according to individual skills, knowledge,

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<sup>15</sup> A. G. Johnson, *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology*, pp.138-139.

<sup>16</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

<sup>17</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Newsletter* 4, December 2004.

and interests. It is the convenors job to encourage the presentation of workshops for the next Gaidhealtachd in newsletters produced throughout the year.

Our Gaidhealtachd is centred on participants sharing their knowledge and skills freely. This transfer of knowledge is the essence of a 'living' tradition' and a vibrant, relevant culture. Please do consider what your contribution could be, in a workshop individually, or as a group.[...] Lively feedback and vigorous participation (despite the heat) is critical to the success of our workshops. I welcome your contribution from the rich tapestry of our Celtic forebears to determine the flavour of Gaidhealtachd '97.<sup>18</sup>

While workshops are held every year in music (violin, tin whistle, bagpipe and chanter, ullean pipes, harp, recorder, *ceilidh* band, composition), dance (Welsh, Irish, Breton, Scottish, *ceilidh*), and song (Gaelic choir, Welsh song, Gaelic song, Jacobite song, singing technique and harmonies) for example, over the last seventeen years other workshops have demonstrated a wide variety of interests. These have included workshops and talks on the following topics: Celtic history - a rushed overview for beginners (1990), arrow fletching (1991), the Celtic way - a spiritual exploration for women (1991), carving and Celtic knotwork (1992), Celtic source materials from Cornwall (1992), the history of Celtic Scotland (1992), leather carving (1992), genealogy (1994), Celtic spirituality (1994), Nigel's world tour of Edinburgh (1997), Irish story telling (1997), the history of Arran and FairIsle knitting (1997), heraldry (1997), mask and banner making (1999), music ramble (1999, 2000), literary ramble (2000, 2001), staff fighting (2000), Celtic migrations - the Druids - who/what/where? (2000), the origin of Celtic Music (2004), performance Burns (2005), travel and songs in Galicia (2005), the life and death of Mary Queen of Scots (2005), dance drama (2006), Gorsedd (2006), traditional stories (2006), the Irish diaspora (2006), genealogy (2007), the Irish in New Zealand (2007), Dark Age Scotland (2007), Gaelic speakers (2007), Nomeculture (2007). Although the content of workshops is entirely dependant on those giving them this list indicates that in recent years more emphasis has been given to historical understanding and also that there is a broader conception of what can be included under the general theme of Celtic. Workshops at the 2007 Gaidhealtachd, aside from music, dance, and song, were centred around the theme of 'What's in a

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<sup>18</sup> Gaidhealtachd Winter Newsletter, 1996.

name?' and included the exploration and history of personal names, genealogy, heraldry, and shield making.<sup>19</sup>

Language workshops have been an integral part of the Summer School programme for the last seventeen years. Like all of the workshops, language workshops are offered according to the number of speakers attending. Workshops intended to give participants an understanding of the different Celtic languages have also been included in the programme, especially in the early years of the Gaidhealtachd. Newsletters indicate that language, like music, dance, and song has been a regular part of the yearly programme and have included: Wither the Gwalli - Welsh (1990), the present day status of the Scots language - a linguists view (1990), Scots Gaelic for intermediate speakers (1990), The Celtic languages (1990), the languages of Scotland (1991), Gaelic (1992, 1994), Gaelic for beginners (1997), introductory Welsh (1997), Irish Gaelic speaking (1999), Welsh language (2006).<sup>20</sup> The newsletters also indicate that language is important to people in the encouragement given to the speaking of everyday greetings on the camp site, and in that for two of the last seventeen years the Gaidhealtachd has had the improvement of Celtic language skills as part of its goal or theme. As little advancement of language skills can realistically be achieved in a week, some of the people of the Gaidhealtachd have recently discussed ways in which they can continue the learning of Gaelic throughout the year. This project will be web based and centred on language programmes available supplemented by regular telephone conversations (in Gaelic) between those wishing to take part.

Since 1997 the Gaidhealtachd programme has been constructed around a theme. This began when the convenors for 1998 decided to centre the programme around poetry and music and the concept has been employed in most of the years since. The concept of a themed Summer School, within the already Celtic theme, is intended as 'a focus to broaden and challenge our experience as 21<sup>st</sup> century Celts'.<sup>21</sup> These themes have varied widely and have had the effect of giving the content of workshops (and other activities)

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<sup>19</sup> From available Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1989 - 2006.

<sup>20</sup> From available Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1989 - 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter 3, 2005.

specific direction. While themes are chosen by the convenors and to some extent reflect their own interests, they also indicate the areas which are considered important to participants in their interpretation and development of being Celtic in the context of present day New Zealand. As for the content of the workshops, the themes chosen by convenors indicate the direction of the Gaidhealtachd community and the intent to broaden the knowledge base of participants. Between 1998 and 2007 themes have been:

- 1998: Poetry and music
- 1999: To encourage and develop our children's talents.  
To achieve greater depth of learning.  
To develop the use of the Celtic languages.
- 2000: To encourage the exploration and development of new Celtic music, song, and dance.
- 2001: To continue to encourage the children in Celtic culture.  
To increase musical abilities of participants.  
To continue to strengthen knowledge base.
- 2002: Same as 2001.
- 2003: No theme.
- 2004: Language - Irish, Welsh, Gaelic.
- 2005: Brittany, Galacia, and Asturias.
- 2006: The Celtic Diaspora.
- 2007: What's in a name?<sup>22</sup>

The theme for 2006 - The Celtic Diaspora, is particularly interesting as it reflects the present debate over diaspora - the British imperial diaspora, the Celtic diaspora, and how these are seen in relationship to recent scholarship on the 'British World'. It also reflects that for many that understanding of the perceived history of the Celts has either not been affected by the opinion of authors such as Simon James,<sup>23</sup> or that this debate is not seen as integral to a Celtic/Ancient Briton/Mesolithic ancestry in the British Isles. It demonstrates the use of Celtic as an easily understood word not to be interpreted factually but rather by the meaning it conveys, and that David McCrone's statement that 'identities should be seen as a concern with "routes" rather than "roots", as maps for the future rather than trails from the past',<sup>24</sup> has possible application for many of those who attend the Gaidhealtachd. The newsletter introducing the theme of the Celtic Diaspora for Gaidhealtachd 2006 describes the Celtic peoples as having in common 'a need to

<sup>22</sup> From Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1998 - 2006.

<sup>23</sup> Simon James, *The Atlantic Celts*.

<sup>24</sup> David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow's Ancestors*, London: Routledge, 1998, p.34.

wander, a strong cultural sense of longing and a need to belong, all tied to a history of oppression and forced removals'.<sup>25</sup> This could suggest a possible sense of identification with Maori although there is no evidence that this is the way it is interpreted by the people of the Gaidhealtachd. More importantly, the 'need to belong' could provide a partial explanation of why the peoples of Scotland, Ireland and Wales so easily and quickly assumed a British New Zealand identity.

**Our THEME for 2006 is the CELTIC DIASPORA.**

The Celtic Diaspora perhaps hasn't ever waned; perhaps it is an integral part of being Celtic? What can you identify from your own life that you wouldn't have experienced if you or your family had stayed in its 'homeland'? How have you interpreted this in a Celtic way? [...] This is a very wide topic and isn't limited to the Highland Clearances or the Great Potato Famine. The Celts seem to have as a common thread a need to wander, a strong cultural sense of longing and a need to belong, all tied to a history of oppression and forced removals. (remember that our ancestors weren't adverse to a little conquering and invading on our part as well). This longing is particularly evident in our musical and oral heritage. Our oral/art and musical history is huge, how about we dig a bit deeper and see what we can find, (and then share at the Summer School), that is currently identifiable as a Celtic link [...] Have fun and let us know early just what workshops you'd like to present!<sup>26</sup>

The organisational framework of the Gaidhealtachd, as well as the presentation of workshops, relies on the contribution of participants in all areas - with 'individuals being encouraged to contribute to the best of their ability [...] from shaping the programme and organising events to keeping the venues clean and maintained'.<sup>27</sup> This means that for the duration of the Summer School week the commonality of form (ways of behaving) and content (meaning) of the community can be experienced with little reference or contact with the world outside. Living 'inside but with a difference' during the Gaidhealtachd's temporal boundary of 2nd - 7th January allows for the experience of living Celtic culture and traditions in a way that the meaning attached to it by individual understanding is no barrier to the creation of the Gaidhealtachd as a cultural community.

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<sup>25</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter 3, 2005

<sup>26</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter 3, 2005.



### **Spatial Boundary: Initiatives and Activities.**

While the people who attend the Gaidhealtachd live dispersed throughout New Zealand, the venue of Whangarei Heads School represents the spatial boundary of the Gaidhealtachd itself. It is the space where the participants sleep (camp sites in the school grounds), eat (lunches provided by the School Committee), attend and/or present workshops and sing, dance, and make music together. It is the 'clearly delimited space',<sup>28</sup> or 'diasporic space' occupied in 1856 by the original settlers and founders of the Whangarei Heads School and since 1990 by the Gaidhealtachd, and the space where a Celtic theme provides the context for the construction of a cultural community. It is also the space where meaning is attached to all of the above. That the space of Whangarei Heads School and its association with the settlers from Nova Scotia is important to the Gaidhealtachd can be seen by excerpts from the *Gaidhealtachd* booklet and scrapbook - in the naming of the Gaidhealtachd, 'we use the Scottish orthography because of the history of the Whangarei Heads area',<sup>29</sup> in the relationship between the two, 'the relationship of the Gaidhealtachd with the local Whangarei Heads community is highly valued',<sup>30</sup> in the payment of participants camping fees as 'a gesture of thanks to Whangarei Heads School and a contribution towards the work it has been doing',<sup>31</sup> and most importantly, that 'Gaidhealtachd means the "homeland" and since 1857 the "Heads" have come to be just that for [...] all New Zealand Celts'.<sup>32</sup> As well as daily workshops and evening *ceilidh*, the Gaidhealtachd week includes special initiatives and activities, many of which relate directly to the Gaidhealtachd's spatial boundary of Whangarei Heads School and the community who founded it. These activities are seen as a way of understanding the history of the area and as a celebration of and a tribute to the Nova Scotian Scots community. It is through the understanding of the history of this community that for some a connection with the migration stories of their own families can be begun. In other words, activities undertaken within the spatial boundary of Whangarei Heads give meaning to these histories and also to the Celtic theme as underlying a community of which migration stories provide a context of commonality and also of difference. Examples of such initiatives are given below - visits to the

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<sup>27</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

<sup>28</sup> Rosalind McClean, p.143.

<sup>29</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

<sup>30</sup> From available Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1989 - 2006.

<sup>31</sup> From available Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1989 - 2006.

<sup>32</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

McLeod Bay Pioneer Cemetery and Smugglers Bay, excursions to the summit of Mt. Manaia, the Memorial Church Service, and the building of the *curragh*.

In November 1990 Doug Chowns and a Gaidhealtachd group spent a day clearing weeds and undergrowth at the Pioneer Cemetery. The 1991 newsletter reports that many of the area's original Scottish settlers were buried in this cemetery and that 'they were the founders of the Whangarei Heads School where we hold our Summer Schools and we feel that it is appropriate to pay them what honour we can'.<sup>33</sup> Among those buried there are John Munro who was discussed in Chapter One, (the first superintendent of Whangarei Heads School), and his family. Subsequent visits to the cemetery have been made, either by boat or by foot around the foreshore as the cemetery until recently has had no public access. These visits have been an important highlight of the Gaidhealtachd week, and, for first time visitors to the Heads, have contributed to the understanding of the history of the area and to their understanding of diaspora. The history of the area of Whangarei Heads area generally, as well as that of the school, has had considerable influence over the development of the Summer School and knowledge of the first settler community has become a touchstone for participants understanding of history in general and also how it is interpreted on a personal level. The following poem was written by a young person whose friend had recently died in a car accident, and demonstrates the way in which episodes from the past (in this case the death of a wife, father and child), can help bring closure on personal grief. It also demonstrates how contact with the physical remains of the past, such as the gravestones in a cemetery, can put into context the cultural streams which comprise a New Zealand identity - the 'cultures entwined as plaited roots of pohutakawa tree'.

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<sup>33</sup> *Gaihealtachd* booklet.

## PIONEER CEMETERY

1854 - 1949

I let my tears gently fall  
 And stand in reverence here  
 As time slips by and from the past  
 Our hearts are locked in grief  
 Yours for your wife, father and child  
 Mine, a dearly loved friend  
 And somehow beneath this hot summer sun  
 I feel you understand  
 Your grave lies thick with wandering dew  
 Beneath the wattle trees  
 The blue of hydrangeas growing close by  
 Blends with sea and sky  
 We pause to think of days of old  
 What tales lie resting here  
 Our cultures entwined as plaited roots  
 Of pohutakawa tree  
 A woolly sheep and his chubby mate  
 Came thundering down the beach  
 (we'd been startled - pleasantly - earlier  
 by a display of jumping fish!)  
 Concluding this - a most strange afternoon  
 We argued of kings and queens  
 And sat with colourful sunhats  
 On a seat carved right out of a tree  
 Returning to camp at Gaidhealtachd  
 I couldn't help but think  
 How rich and complex my experience was  
 At Pioneer Cemetery.<sup>34</sup>  
*Corrie Williams 5.1.95*

A further way in which an understanding of the history of the Whangarei Heads area, and for those of a Gaelic speaking background, an understanding of how religious ceremonies would have been experienced, and more importantly, how they would have sounded, can be seen in the Gaelic Church Service of 1994. On Sunday January 2, 1994, the Gaidhealtachd held a memorial service in Gaelic at the McLeod Bay Scots Presbyterian Church built in 1858 by the Nova Scotian settlers. It was the first time any such service had been held since the Gaelic language ceased to be used in the church.<sup>35</sup> Until this church was built the Rev. Norman McLeod walked down the ten mile beach

<sup>34</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook.*

<sup>35</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Gaelic Church Service Commemorative Programme, p.2.*

from Waipu and rowed across the harbour to take the service in George McLeod's barn or Donald McGregor's home. Sometimes residents from the Heads crossed over to Marsden Point and walked to Waipu.<sup>36</sup> The service organised by the Gaidhealtachd was in memory of the settlers of Waipu and Whangarei Heads and the late Frank Carlisle - fiddler and friend of the Gaidhealtachd, and was conducted in Gaelic.<sup>37</sup> Its primary purpose was to provide the experience of listening to the Gaelic language in the same manner as the first settlers of the Heads would have experienced it in Church. Pearce notes that 'realising the strength of the bond of language in holding a community together, he (McLeod) saw to it that the Gaelic tongue did not die out, [...] accordingly, every Sunday there was a service in Gaelic'.<sup>38</sup> No evidence is available as to when the McLeod Bay Church Services changed to English, but McKenzie says that the last Gaelic speaking minister inducted at Waipu was the Rev. Angus McDonald in 1912.<sup>39</sup> The idea for the historical re-enactment began when George Tiller of Whangarei Heads obtained a Gaelic Bible from the Whangarei Public Library to be read in the McLeod Bay Church during the 1993 Gaidhealtachd.<sup>40</sup> For the Memorial Service a written script and audio tape were provided by the Rev. Roderick MacDonald of North Uist and the service was conducted by Gaidhealtachd members and Gaelic speakers Murdo MacDonald and Mary Marshall. A DVD and audio tape of this service for the 2007 "Scots" exhibition at Te Papa is presently being prepared by Wayne Lawrence at the request of the National Library of New Zealand. This re-enactment was seen as the highlight of the 1994 Gaidhealtachd.<sup>41</sup> This was in no way a celebration of the Rev. Norman McLeod, but a celebration of the people who first settled the area and especially a celebration of the Gaelic language. The belief that 'each nation is its own world and each national language provides its own specific and unique mode of access to that world. Language is not merely a means by which we describe a world, it is a way in which we form and express our special place in the world',<sup>42</sup> would seem to be supported by many Gaidhealtachd participants, and the Church Service conducted in Gaelic one example of how the world of Gaelic speakers in the past might be accessed.

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<sup>36</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>37</sup> *Commemorative Programme*, p.1.

<sup>38</sup> G. L. Pearce, *The Scots of New Zealand*, Auckland: Collins, 1976, p.75.

<sup>39</sup> N. R. McKenzie, *The Gael Fares Forth*, p.198.

<sup>40</sup> *Commemorative Programme*, p.3.

<sup>41</sup> Gaidhealtachd newsletter, 1995.

<sup>42</sup> Ross Poole, 'The Coming of Nationalism', *Nation and Identity*, London: Routledge, 1999, p.22.

One of the initiatives suggested by the inaugural Gaidhealtachd in 1990 was the building of one or more *curragh* with the aim of establishing *curragh* racing as a sport in New Zealand.<sup>43</sup> The funding which was applied for to build these *curragh*, was not granted, and the project went into abeyance until 2005 when a participant of the Gaidhealtachd, a classic boatbuilder, approached the Gaidhealtachd Trust with an offer of building a *curragh* on site at Whangarei Heads School during the 2006 Gaidhealtachd.<sup>44</sup> This traditional small boat has been built by the peoples of the British Isles for over two thousand years and the building of a *curragh* at the Gaidhealtachd was seen by some as an example of the continuance of a 'living tradition' in that *curragh* are still being built and used in the British Isles in the same way as they have been for two millennia.<sup>45</sup> Building began during the 2006 Gaidhealtachd in sight of all and with a hands on approach - all those who wished to were involved in its construction under the supervision of the boatbuilder. The timber, which was steamed and bent into shape, was kowhai, as it is a 'water timber'. The partially completed *curragh* was carried to the closing ceremony of the 2006 Gaidhealtachd and blessed.<sup>46</sup> In 2007, the bitumen was applied, the skin attached, and the *curragh* was named, blessed, and launched at Taurikura Bay. Anyone who wished to suggest a name wrote it down and all who were present at the *ceilidh* on the evening of January 5 (including the children) voted for their preference. The name chosen was *Cunamara*, which means hound of the sea, and which has the same meaning and is spelt the same in both Scots and Irish Gaelic. The completion and launching of *Cunamara*, an emotional and uplifting experience for all those present, was understood as a celebration of both a traditional form of boatbuilding and the Nova Scotian settlers at the Heads who built their own boats to sail to New Zealand. Many of the original settlers were seafarers and the practice of boatbuilding continued for many years in the area.<sup>47</sup> The building of this *curragh* can be seen as the transmission of traditional practices and its construction in native timbers as an adaptation of these practices to a New Zealand context. As an example of an ancient but still living tradition, the *curragh* has been understood by some as a representation of the

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<sup>43</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>44</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30th October, 2006.

<sup>45</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

<sup>46</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

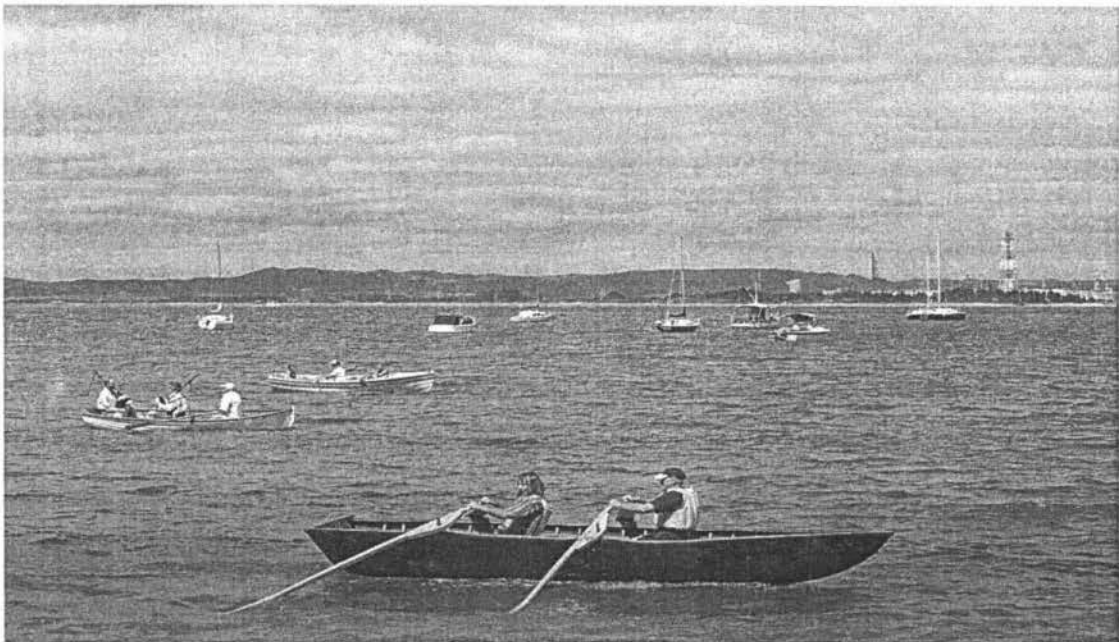
<sup>47</sup> W. R. Vallance, p.39.

Gaidhealtachd itself - a community which celebrates traditions from a temporally and spatially distant 'homeland' but which also adapts them to a New Zealand context.<sup>48</sup>



*Blessing and launch of Cunamara, Taurikura Bay, 6 January 2007*

*Photographs: Rhys Evans*



*Cunamara Taurikura Bay, 6 January 2007*

*Photograph: Rhys Evans*

Some years the Gaidhealtachd programme includes a visit to Smugglers Bay for a picnic and treasure hunt for the children. This is to celebrate and commemorate the activities carried out here by some of the Nova Scotian settlers of Whangarei Heads. Vallance gives the following account of these activities:

<sup>48</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.



To keep a watch on shipping, a revenue cutter roamed the coasts. This, in those days, was a challenge to many men of independent spirit, and dodging the customs became a game of interest, excitement and ingenuity. A considerable trade was carried on by locally owned schooners [...] As the swift sailing schooners, carrying, among other goods, the whiskey of New Caledonia, neared these shores, a keen lookout, purely, of course, by way of interest, was kept for the Revenue cutter. If no sign of the "Government Boat" was seen in Bream Bay, a quick visit was made to Smugglers Cove, cases of whiskey smartly landed and buried in the sand. It is not right or proper, of course, even at this distance of time, that the defeaters of Her Majesty's Customs should be named. Nor should it be seriously suggested that any known residents of the "Heads" should have been interested in visiting Smugglers Bay to pick up flotsam and jetsam.<sup>49</sup>

Activities such as the treasure hunts at Smugglers Bay not only provide a knowledge of the history of the area, but also increase the understanding of the meaning of diaspora - for those of the Gaidhealtachd Whangarei Heads is a place where a diasporic community lived, and while this is not for them a personal experience, they are the inheritors of it. Some see the area as imbued with the consciousness of Nova Scotian community and this provides them with a link back to places their families came from and the marrying of the sub-tropical environment of New Zealand with the much harsher environment of the insular Celtic countries.<sup>50</sup>

As mentioned in chapter one, Mt. Manaia dominates the playing fields of Whangarei Heads School where the Gaidhealtachd participants camp. Most years a supervised walk - or more appropriately - a climb, has been organised to the summit of the mountain. As this is a serious and strenuous climb each group of climbers has marked the achievement in an individual way - by the blowing of a conch shell - a Polynesian adaptation for the sound of the carnyx - a Celtic war horn depicted on artefacts such as the Gundestrup Cauldron, the playing of the bagpipes, the raising of flags, or even by the writing of a poem. As John Munro's letter of 1896 in the *Mac-Tulla* newspaper shows, celebrations at the top of Mt. Manaia are an established tradition.

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<sup>49</sup> W. R. Vallance, pp.45-47.

<sup>50</sup> Interview Jackie Davidson, 30 November, 2006.

People often climb the mountain and go to the top of Manai. Once a group of young people, my own children included, danced an eightsome reel on the top of Manai, which is about sixteen feet wide.<sup>51</sup>

As well as activities based on the history of the Whangarei Heads area, some of the items of the nightly *ceilidh* demonstrate the intent of the people of the Gaidhealtachd to remember, celebrate, and pass on to the next generation of Celtic New Zealanders, episodes in history which are often generally unknown and which are considered important cultural mores which typify the 'Celtic spirit'. One such presentation was given on the Scottish night of the 2007 Gaidhealtachd. Preceded by a short historical introduction, men attending the Gaidhealtachd who had some military background, performed the Reel of the 51st Division. This is one of the most popular Scottish country dances and was invented by Scottish soldiers who were interned in Germany as prisoners of war during World War 1.<sup>52</sup> Although many myths and legends have centred around the circumstances which resulted in the creation of this dance, the fact that some 10,000 men of the Seaforth Highlanders, the Cameron Highlanders, the Gordon Highlanders, and the Black Watch, were left in France to fight alongside the French Army at the time of the Dunkirk evacuations, and who were surrendered to Rommel on 12 June 1940 by Major General Fortune, is without doubt. Captain Ian Campbell (later the Duke of Argyll) who served as divisional intelligence officer wrote in 1940 that 'it has always been abundantly clear to me that no division has ever been more uselessly sacrificed'.<sup>53</sup> Some of the officers of the original 51st (Highland) Division were interned in Oflag V11-C - a POW camp near Salzburg and the Reel of the 51st Division (originally called the 51st Country Dance or Laufen Reel) was invented during the winter of 1940 by three officers: Lt. Jimmy Atkinson (Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders), Lt. Peter Oliver (4th Seaforth Highlanders), and Lt. Col. Tom Harris Hunter (51st Division Logistics Group RASC).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> John Munro, Letter from New Zealand, 2, June, 1896.

<sup>52</sup> <http://my.strathspey.org/anselm/stories/reelofthe51st> accessed 9 January 2007.

<sup>53</sup> <http://my.strathspey.org/anselm/stories/reelofthe51st> accessed 9 January 2007.

<sup>54</sup> <http://my.strathspey.org/anselm/stories/reelofthe51st> accessed 9 January 2007.



*Reel of the 51st Division, 5 January 2007*

*Photograph: Rhys Evans*

In a similar manner, a fancy dress parade held as part of one evenings *ceilidh* in January 2007, in which those who wished to dressed as a Celtic person from myth, legend, or history, demonstrates the way in which the people of the Gaidhealtachd use history to inform, to celebrate, and to enjoy as a community their cultural heritage. Characters portrayed included Grace O'Malley (historical Irish woman pirate), Brian Boru (legendary/historical Irish leader), Celtic warriors (men, women, and children), a mythical Irish hound, and Norman McLeod. The person who dressed as McLeod was also the Gaidhealtachd convenor for 2007, and his presence (McLeod's) at the evenings fancy dress parade was possibly the most prominent role he has ever had at the Summer School. During the parade all those involved explained who they were and gave a brief introduction to the life and times of their character. In this way the transference of cultural knowledge becomes entertaining and enjoyable to all and balances the more structured activities of the daytime workshops.

Activities undertaken within the spatial boundary of Whangarei Heads both bring understanding of and also give meaning to the history of the diasporic community of the Nova Scotian Scots. They demonstrate how the Celtic theme as underlying a spatially

diffuse, temporarily different community of which migration stories provide a context of commonality and also of difference has contributed to the construction of the Gaidhealtachd as a cultural community.

### **Symbolic Boundary: Ceremonies and Traditions.**



*Address to the Haggis Gaidhealtachd 2007*

*Photograph: Rhys Evans*

Cohen says that the symbolic boundary of community is the meaning invested in it by its individual members.<sup>55</sup> Because of these differing perceptions he says that, 'the consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols [...] the reality and efficacy of the community's boundary - and therefore the community itself - depends upon its symbolic construction and embellishment'.<sup>56</sup> This section will discuss the symbolic boundaries of the Gaidhealtachd with reference to the ceremonies and events which can be seen as integral to the creation of 'Gaidhealtachd traditions' and therefore, it will be argued, the symbols which give participants a sense of identity within a bounded whole by the vitality of the Gaidhealtachd community's culture.

<sup>55</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.12.

<sup>56</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.12.

The Gaidhealtachd is deliberately based on non-sectarian spiritual foundations',<sup>57</sup> and while there are a number of rituals, ceremonies and events which could be interpreted as ritualistic, these are not to be understood as relating to any individual spiritual or religious doctrine. Catherine Bell describes the theory of ritual held by many culturalists as comprising of the belief that ritual is the means by which the cultural system and the social system interact and harmonise, and the belief that the symbols and symbolic actions of ritual can be interpreted as a system ordered like a language for the primary purpose of communication.<sup>58</sup> It is in this sense that the ceremonies and activities of the Gaidhealtachd are interpreted here. The Gaidhealtachd booklet demonstrates the meaning of ritual to the organisers and how it is intended this should be interpreted by participants.

A number of rituals attend the conduct of the Gaidhealtachd, particularly the opening and closing ceremonies. The reason for ritual is to make visible the ethos and principles of the Gaidhealtachd and to make them a tangible experience that can be remembered by those who return and by those who do not. The shared experience is something that exists forever in common.<sup>59</sup>

The opening and closing ceremonies of the Summer School week delineate the temporal and spatial perimeters of the Gaidhealtachd by their bounding in symbolic action. At midday on the 2nd January at the call of a piper, those attending gather together to be welcomed by the convenor. Although the content of the opening and closing ceremonies varies each year, the format usually involves a summoning to meet by the call of the bagpipes, the encouragement of all to contribute to the ceremony in any of the Celtic languages be it in welcome, farewell or blessing, and the raising and lowering of the carved pole, Celtic knot and Gaidhealtachd flag. The knot was the concept of artist Douglas Chowns and each strand represents, and was put in place, by the eighty-two participants at the first Gaidhealtachd in January 1990.<sup>60</sup> The Gaidhealtachd booklet says that 'The knot signifies the strength of that and subsequent gatherings, and of the ongoing principles of the Gaidhealtachd'.<sup>61</sup> It is also a sundial - the alignment of the

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<sup>57</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

<sup>58</sup> Catherine Bell, *Ritual; Perspectives and Dimensions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.61.

<sup>59</sup> Catherine Bell, *Ritual; Perspectives and Dimensions*, p.61.

<sup>60</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

<sup>61</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

pole from which the knot is suspended means that at 12 midday on the 2nd January its shadow touches a marker stone under which a 'time capsule' containing mementoes of previous Summer Schools are kept.

Cultural anthropologists not only suggest that symbols and symbolic actions of ritual can be interpreted as a system for the primary purpose of communication,<sup>62</sup> but also that the interaction of cultural ideas and social experience through the medium of ritual is a way of interpreting change.<sup>63</sup> Some, Edmond Leach for example, believe that ritual facilitates both the continuity and the transformation of social structures,<sup>64</sup> while others, such as Clifford Geertz, consider ritual as a device for the 'ongoing processes of adaptation and renewal that constitute communities and plays a crucial role in the way in which the sociocultural holism of a living community works'.<sup>65</sup> The collapse in 2005 of the pole from which the Gaidhealtachd knot has been suspended annually since 1990 has provided an opportunity to transmit the concept of the knot for those who initially wove it to a different (in the main) group of Summer School participants. As demonstrated by a notice in the second Gaidhealtachd newsletter of 2005, it has also allowed for the adaptation and renewal of its ritual significance, and, while the symbols itself remains the same, the meaning attached to them can be seen to be interpreted both by individual understanding and also by their meaning within a living and changing tradition.

Sadly, but timely, the carved pole/gnomon supporting the Gaidhealtachd Knot rotted at ground level and collapsed earlier this year. Sad because part of the visual and material tradition [of the Gaidhealtachd] was damaged, but timely because we now have an opportunity to resurrect the symbol and meaning of the sculptures and artwork and move it into a new phase of our living tradition.<sup>66</sup>

A proposal for the construction of a new pole by Liz and Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans was accepted by the Gaidhealtachd Trust. This was built out of Jarra - which, as explained

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<sup>62</sup> Catherine Bell, *Ritual; Perspectives and Dimensions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.61.

<sup>63</sup> Catherine Bell, p.66.

<sup>64</sup> Catherine Bell, p.66.

<sup>65</sup> Clifford Geertz, cited in Catherine Bell, p.67.

<sup>66</sup> Gaidhealtachd newsletter 2, 2005.



by Lindsey was symbolic because it is not a native New Zealand wood and was bought here by boat as were the ancestors of most of those who attend the Gaidhealtachd.<sup>67</sup> During the opening ceremony that included the placing of the new pole, a cap of copper, designed by the women, was attached to the top, also by the women attending. The old knot and pole have been mounted permanently within the covered extension of Whangarei Heads School where they hang 'beyond the pale (of the classrooms), in the margins, and neither here nor there (neither inside or out)'.<sup>68</sup> The use of the language of Diaspora discourse to describe cultural items of the Gaidhealtachd is interesting as it indicates an awareness of and identification with Diaspora consciousness and also perhaps recognition of the incongruity of Celtic knotwork and carved gnomon in a seem-tropical environment.

The opening and closing ceremonies are where the temporal and spatial boundaries of the Gaidhealtachd are joined by its symbolic one. Although there is no formal obligation to do so most participants attend both. These ceremonies are seen by most who attend as the beginning and ending which seals the community and which are vital to the creation, maintenance and development of the Gaidhealtachd as a living community bounded, and bonded, by the inclusive Celtic *stead*.<sup>69</sup>

Other activities which can be seen as ritualistic or as creating 'Gaidhealtachd traditions' include the annual Celtic War Game and the format and content of the final evening *Ceilidh*. The Gaidhealtachd has a strong ethos of family participation and encourages people of all ages and diverse capabilities to join in the activities.<sup>70</sup> The Celtic War Games, although organised primarily for the younger participants, are popular with everyone. They usually involve some form of competition between one or more teams, costumes, flags, war paint (wad approximation), and are extremely physical with complicated rules and regulations. There is usually a referee and penalties and regulations vary every year according to the design of the game. The competition is as much about the devising of increasingly clever ideas and strategies for these games as it

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<sup>67</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

<sup>68</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

<sup>69</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

is about winning them and the games are enjoyed by those watching as well as those participating. The combined evening of war game and communal meal mirrors the perceived concept of the Celts as a warlike and feast loving peoples. By enjoyment of and participation in the activities of the archetypal image of Celtic tradition, the people of the Gaidhealtachd are bound together by symbolic action.

The nightly Gaidhealtachd *Ceilidh* are held in the Taurikura Hall which is believed to have been built by Kenny Rob McDonald, one of the first settlers from Nova Scotia.<sup>71</sup> It is the same hall which was referred to in Chapter One. It will be recalled that the newspaper report of the *Northern Advocate* (March 16th 1901) stated that after items were presented at the Whangarei Heads School children's concert, *God Save the King* was sung for the first time in public and that after this the hall was 'cleared for dancing according to their ancient custom'.<sup>72</sup> The nightly *ceilidh* are thumbed - that is every night with the exception of the last, the dances, music, stories and items have are mainly Welsh, Irish, Scottish or other (Breton for example) content. The final *Ceilidh* is the place where participants demonstrate the skills and knowledge which they have gained in workshops during the previous week, and also for activities which mark the end of that week. Regular final *Ceilidh* events include: the piping in of the haggis and the address to it, the last dance - the *Hebridean Strip the Willow* - danced to the bagpipes (piped some years by Bain McGreggor one of the Gaidhealtachd's founders and one of New Zealand's leading pipers), the singing of *The Flower of Scotland* and *Auld Lang Syne*. It is suggested by some cultural anthropologists that ritual is the means by which the cultural system and the social system interact and harmonise,<sup>73</sup> and the final *celidh* evening of the Gaidhealtachd would seem to support this premise. It is a celebration of the weeks achievements of learning and growth and of the living within a cultural community bounded by the Celtic theme. It is also a testimony to the vitality of that culture and therefore, because of members perception of it, the reality of the community itself.

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<sup>70</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

<sup>71</sup> Have not been able to find a date for this.

<sup>72</sup> The *Northern Advocate*, 16 March 1901: Florence Keene Register, Northland Room, Whangarei Public Library.

A growing awareness of a cultural past lineage has made me very aware of the importance of handing down the bits that grow joy and strength like music and dance, and also the bits that grow wisdom, such as an awareness of historical results of tribal warfare, racism - 'anti-sassenach' stuff. I see the sense of community, belonging and simple happiness that regular *ceilidhing* can create in people of diverse ages which is important in this current time when children, adolescents and adults rarely socialise together.<sup>74</sup>

By an examination of the organisational framework, the practices and activities, ceremonies and traditions of the Gaidhealtachd, this chapter has demonstrated how the theme of Celtic has provided the fundamental context through which a cultural community has been created, sustained and has developed. The temporal boundary of the 2nd - 7th January, the spatial boundary of Whangarei Heads School, and the symbolic boundary of the inclusive Celtic *steidh* can be understood as creating a community which has, as described by Cohen, 'a commonality of form (ways of behaving) and content (meaning),<sup>75</sup> or, in other words, 'a shared experience [...] that exists forever in common'.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Catherine Bell, p.61.

<sup>74</sup> Jackie Davidson, Fieldwork Project, 2004.

<sup>75</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.21.

<sup>76</sup> *Gaidhealtachd* booklet.

## Chapter Four Connections

*Diasporist discourses reflect the sense of being part of an ongoing transnational network that includes the homeland, not as something simply left behind, but as a place of attachment in a contrapuntal modernity.<sup>1</sup>*

This chapter will discuss whether any connection can be discerned between the descendants of immigrants from the insular Celtic countries and their ethnic origins. It will examine connections between the Gaidhealtachd, Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotian community of Whangarei Heads. It will also examine links between the individual people of the Gaidhealtachd, the initiatives and networks established by the Gaidhealtachd, and between the Gaidhealtachd and other organisations. It will argue that it is through these connections that the people of the Gaidhealtachd - descendants of the Imperial British/Celtic Diaspora - have created and sustained a community which demonstrates one way in which diasporic consciousness has emerged and evolved in its spaces of dispersal. It will also ask, as part of a world wide diaspora community of Celtic ancestry, how unique the Gaidhealtachd actually is.

In his article 'Local Community or Atomised Society',<sup>2</sup> Miles Fairburn argues that immigrants in colonial New Zealand were largely unsuccessful in the establishment or in the rebuilding of community in their new homeland, giving the main reasons for this as the wide dispersal of settlements, the lack of class or kin bonds, and the transience of the population. These settlements were not only widely dispersed geographically, but also culturally. Belich says that while there were some attempts to establish areas of ethnic exclusivity, these attempts were isolated, and, in the main, failures.<sup>3</sup> Belich includes among the successful communities in which difference persisted well into the twentieth century the 'Highlanders of Waipu, who arrived, via Nova Scotia, in 1853-60 under their prophet Norman McLeod'.<sup>4</sup> Although Fairburn argues that New Zealand was

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<sup>1</sup> James Clifford, 'Diasporas', in Steven Vertovec, & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999, p.224.

<sup>2</sup> Miles Fairburn, 'Local Community or Atomised Society', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 16, 2, (1982), pp.146-165.

<sup>3</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p.314.

<sup>4</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p.314.

an 'atomised society' rather than one comprising of local communities,<sup>5</sup> others have suggested that research into how pioneers remembered their own pasts reveals that while the telling of these memories were shaped and selected and further transformed through writing, the pioneers 'emphasised colonisation as a creative process: building and reproducing society, community, and "civilisation" in a barren sphere'.<sup>6</sup> Fiona Hamilton says that the establishment of communities was a reality for many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century immigrants to New Zealand:<sup>7</sup>

[...] it was something they or people they knew had been involved in and remembered. It is possible to see in the remembrance of pioneers and the 'early days', negotiation between those who remembered the foundation of communities (as participants) and those who regarded the founding of communities as part of a larger abstract historical narrative.<sup>8</sup>

Hamilton suggests that while the stories of the early settlers were incorporated into a discourse that emphasised their part in the 'larger abstract historical narrative' of civilisation, nation, and empire, the content of their memoirs often related to specific localities and had little connection to these narratives.<sup>9</sup> The stories of pioneers, however they are interpreted, are part of the construction myths common to all colonising societies, and they celebrate 'the creation and replication of community and society'.<sup>10</sup> Stories, real or imagined, of community building by settlers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, can be seen then as part of the colonising process. Can stories of community building, particularly that of cultural communities such as the Gaidhealtachd, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries therefore be seen as part of the decolonisation process?

If stories of the building of cultural communities in late twentieth and early twenty-first century New Zealand are to be examined in relationship to processes of decolonisation, it is necessary to consider the impact assimilation has had on all immigrant ethnic

<sup>5</sup> Miles Fairburn, *Ideal Society: 'Local Community or Atomised Society'*, pp.146-165.

<sup>6</sup> Fiona Hamilton, 'Pioneering History: Negotiating Pakeha Collective memory in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol. 36, 1, 2002, p.76.

<sup>7</sup> Fiona Hamilton, p.76.

<sup>8</sup> Fiona Hamilton, p.77.

<sup>9</sup> Fiona Hamilton, p.74.

groups. While assimilation is usually discussed in the context of indigenous peoples and the colonising majority, the same policies by government usually apply to all members of society. Between 1840 and 1935, New Zealand government policy and interaction with Maori was based on the ideology of assimilation - while protection and assistance was to be provided, the ultimate goal of government policy was the control of Maori and their remaining assets (namely land) by gradual absorption into the mainstream of British society and the 'phasing out of the cultural basis of Maori society'.<sup>11</sup> In 1862 the New Zealand Parliament resolved:

That in the adoption of any policy, or the pressing of any laws affecting the native race, this House will keep before it, as it's highest object, the entire amalgamation of all Her Majesty's subjects in New Zealand.<sup>12</sup>

It is understanding the 'entire amalgamation of *all* her Majesty's subjects'<sup>13</sup> which is important here, for although this legislation appeared to be aimed primarily at Maori and the 'phasing out of the cultural basis of Maori society',<sup>14</sup> in reality its effect, if not its intent, was the amalgamation of all cultures and of the homogenisation of society as a whole. In *Paradise Reforged* Belich calls this homogenisation of society 'the recolonial demand for ethnic homogeneity' and identifies it as problematic for the historical assessment of New Zealand ethnicity because of the 'conspiracy of silence in the sources'.<sup>15</sup> He says that this silence illustrates the 'power, persuasiveness, and persistence of the recolonial demand for ethnic homogeneity',<sup>16</sup> and that it was achieved by ethnic difference being minimised, reduced, concealed, and denied.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Fiona Hamilton, p.77.

<sup>11</sup> Augie Fleras, 'Towards "Tu Tangata": Historical Developments and Current Trends in Maori Policy and Administration', *Political Science*, 37:1, (1985), p.20.

<sup>12</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* 1862, cited in Augie Fleras, 'Towards "Tu Tangata": Historical Developments and Current Trends in Maori Policy and Administration', p.21.

<sup>13</sup> My italics.

<sup>14</sup> Augie Fleras, p.20.

<sup>15</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.218.

<sup>16</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.218.

<sup>17</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.216.



[...] ethnic difference in New Zealand was *minimised* through increasingly tight control of the immigration gates; *reduced*, through culturally enforced conformism; *concealed*, through the pretended or partial assimilation of ethnic minorities; and *denied*, through a mix of myth, misunderstanding, statistical tricks and bare-faced lies.<sup>18</sup>

While there is undoubtedly much to be said for this statement by Belich, the question remains as to whether the minimisation, reduction, concealment, and denial of ethnic difference in New Zealand was achieved by imposition from above or by tacit acceptance by society at large. Perhaps there was a measure of both, because while New Zealand Government policy intent was for the 'entire amalgamation of all Her Majesty's subjects in New Zealand',<sup>19</sup> as the Gaidhealtachd Newsletter 3 in 2005 says, the Celtic peoples have been understood to have had 'a strong cultural sense of longing and a need to belong'.<sup>20</sup> This is evident also in the results of the 2004 Research Project which found that none of the participants felt that there was conflict between a Celtic and a New Zealand identity - in other words, that a being Celtic New Zealander was not a contradiction in terms.

Quoting Akenson's statistics for the composition of Pakeha between the 1860s and the 1950s (50-53% English and Welsh, 21-24% Scots, and 16-18% Irish),<sup>21</sup> Belich asks whether these statistics give any insight into ethnic origins of Pakeha and whether any ethnic differences have persisted.<sup>22</sup> While admitting that in specific instances (such as the Nova Scotian Scots), and the example of the Irish Catholics, some differences endured, Belich says that, although the traditional answer to the question of the persistence of ethnic difference in New Zealand would be that all ethnic groups were assimilated into a mainstream English or Anglo-Pakeha culture, ethnic groups were actually part of developing 'compound cultures'.<sup>23</sup> These 'compound cultures' were global (the adoption of Christianity for example), 'pan-British' (the creation of the transnational British diaspora), and New Zealand (a compound of Maori, Anglo/Celtic

<sup>18</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.216.

<sup>19</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* 1862, cited in Augie Fleras, p.21.

<sup>20</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter 3, 2005.

<sup>21</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.218.

<sup>22</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.218.

<sup>23</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.219.

and other minority groups).<sup>24</sup> Belich argues that assimilation into New Zealand culture did reduce ethnic difference, but it was assimilation into a New Zealand common culture in which all ethnicity's, particularly the Scots, had a part in creating.<sup>25</sup> Belich also says that the number of Scots in New Zealand was almost twice that of Scotland and that, apart from Scotland, New Zealand was the place where the make-up of the 'common culture' was influenced the most by its Scottish component.<sup>26</sup> This would seem to be substantiated by the prominent place taken by Scottish activities at the Gaidhealtachd as indicated by workshops offered in newsletters, especially in the early years. Most people attending the Gaidhealtachd can claim some ancestry from Scotland, the playing of the pipes is always part of proceedings, and many own a kilt. Some activities of the Gaidhealtachd - such as the visits to the Pioneer Cemetery and Smugglers Bay also have a Scottish flavour, although this would seem to be mainly in commemoration of the original Gaelic speaking Scottish settlers. The importance of the settler community at the Heads and their identification with the Scots Gaelic language is an example of how the cultural community of the Gaidhealtachd addresses the issue of multicultural differences under the theme of Celtic. As discussed in Chapter Three, the concept of community does not necessarily imply uniformity, but rather a commonality of form (ways of behaving), and content (meaning), which allows for differences among members, because, although the meaning attached to a communities symbols may be interpreted in different ways by different people, the symbols themselves remain the same.<sup>27</sup> The recognition and celebration of Scots Gaelic, for example, is equally celebrated by Welsh or Irish participants of the Gaidhealtachd (and vice versa), because the language is symbolic of a common culture (meaning) and a common desire to be immersed in the culture of the various Celtic nations (ways of behaving).

The importance placed on the speaking of Gaelic is particularly emphasised. This is demonstrated by fact that the main objective of the Memorial Church Service was to provide for Gaidhealtachd participants and other members of the congregation the experience of how the service would have been when it was conducted in Gaelic.<sup>28</sup> The

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<sup>24</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.218.

<sup>25</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp.219-222.

<sup>26</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp.219-222.

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.21.

<sup>28</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

question to be asked is how assimilated into this common culture were individual Scots, Irish and Welsh identities? In a recent interview on *National Radio*,<sup>29</sup> Hamish Keith claimed that the question of New Zealand identity was a twentieth century one - that prior to 1907 New Zealand was part of the Tasman world and that it was New Zealand's decision 'not to get married to Australia' which caused an New Zealanders to wonder who they were and also to disown their past.<sup>30</sup> While there are a number of sides to this debate, Keith's belief that the myths of culture that New Zealanders were 'shoehorned into believing', came from this period - (for Pakeha a rural mythology and for Maori a false history), and that until 1970 it was a matter of 'not what we were together but what we were apart', with Maori definite about who they were, but Pakeha indefinite and refusing to 'put their hands up',<sup>31</sup> is a reasonable proposition. Keith's allusion to Pakeha 'putting their hands up' would seem to mean an identification, recognition, and celebration of cultural/ethnic heritage and identity, and also perhaps an admission of the part played by their forefathers in the colonising process and the exploitation of Maori in New Zealand. This interpretation would sit comfortably with the people of the Gaidhealtachd. He also said that despite bureaucratic constraints, culture 'went on below the surface' as people 'are what they are' - giving art as example as a narrative about cultural ideas and how we come to terms with them.<sup>32</sup> This is also relevant to Gaidhealtachd as can be seen by number of art and craft workshops listed in Chapter Three - art as signifying who and what is Celtic interpreted in a contemporary form.

The concept of cultural identity as something continuing 'below the surface' has also been expressed by some who attend the Gaidhealtachd.<sup>33</sup> Results of a Research Project whose participants were regular attendees at the Gaidhealtachd showed that for most, stories about, and awareness of, a cultural background had been part of their family life. One participant had spoken Gaelic at home with her father and become involved at an early age with highland dancing,<sup>34</sup> others had learnt about their ancestry from parents or grandparents,<sup>35</sup> and some migration stories had been passed on to participants. For some

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<sup>29</sup> National Radio, Hidden Treasures with Trevor Reekie, 3 December, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> National Radio, 3 December, 2006.

<sup>31</sup> National Radio, 3 December, 2006.

<sup>32</sup> National Radio, 3 December, 2006.

<sup>33</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Fiona Halliday, Fieldwork Project, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> Louise Evans, Rosalind Howell, Fieldwork Project, 2004.

of the participants of the Research Project attendance at the Gaidhealtachd had originally been about recovery of their cultural heritage - it was because they knew little about it themselves that they wanted to learn and understand so they could pass this knowledge on to their children.<sup>36</sup> Although the degree to which participants were aware of their cultural background, the desire to incorporate knowledge of it into the lives of their children was common to all. Another feeling generally held by those who attend the Gaidhealtachd is expressed in the Epilogue to the *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet which says that: 'This yearly gathering has given us understanding and confidence in our cultural roots',<sup>37</sup> indicating that attendance at the Gaidhealtachd for some has provided both understanding of cultural heritage and also the confidence to reclaim cultural identity minimised, reduced, concealed, and denied by the 'power, persuasiveness, and persistence of the recolonial demand for ethnic homogeneity'.<sup>38</sup>

For some an emotional connection or link with the temporally and spatially distant homeland still exists. This is described as an inner knowing, as a link people feel with other Gaidhealtachd participants which they do not share with those who do not attend, as a genetic or racial memory which dance and song brings back, and as a feeling of camaraderie, clan, whanau, community, the picking up of a racial archetype, and a feeling of longing.<sup>39</sup> Both the Welsh and Irish languages have words to describe the emotional longing mentioned above, which, although they do not translate exactly into English, express what is commonly called 'homesickness', a term not applicable to those whose ancestral home is spatially, and more importantly, temporally, far removed. *Hiraeth* (Welsh) means longing or nostalgia, and being indivisible from the land, and *ionndrain* (Irish) portrays a sense of loss/longing which comes from the removal from one's ancestral land.<sup>40</sup> Both *hiraeth* and *ionndrain* express an emotion which is often associated with Scottish feelings of longing, although research has not discovered a word or phrase in Gaelic to describe these feeling which relate to the loss of, or longing for, one's homeland. Scottish nostalgia for a distant homeland is well noted however. In his book *A Global Clan*, A. James Hammerton compares the nostalgia of English

<sup>36</sup> Rosalind Howell, Fieldwork Project, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> Kathy McDonald Robertson & Nigel Robertson, Epilogue, *Gaidhealtachd* Booklet, 1999.

<sup>38</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.218.

<sup>39</sup> Lindsay McAuliffe-Evans, 30 October, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> Alistair Moffat, *Before Scotland*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2005.

immigrants to Australia for an idealised English countryside to those from Scotland who 'focused on more generalised symbols and icons of the nation or an undifferentiated commitment to a Scottish sense of nationhood, [...] the Scottish dancing and clan tartans, icons of yearning distinctly national rather than local or regional'.<sup>41</sup> It is in this sense of Scottishness that the connection to the Nova Scotian community of Whangarei Heads by the people of the Gaidhealtachd can be seen. The activities of the Gaidhealtachd and the meaning given to the history of the area by participants of the Gaidhealtachd can be seen in the context of a *shared* history.

The generally understood meaning of diaspora is that it involves some form of disarticulation - displacement, detachment, uprooting and dispersion,<sup>42</sup> and while this disarticulation is usually of those whose 'spaces of dispersal' are distant from their homelands, the same feeling of yearning is evident in smaller scale diaspora such as the Highland Clearances. That this was yearning both for the lost homeland and also for those people lost *from* the homeland can be seen in the writing of Mary McPherson whose songs were the subject of a workshop at the 1997 Gaidhealtachd. Mary, also known as Mairi Mhor (1821-1898), was a poet, songwriter, and singer from the Isle of Skye who was exiled from her home as a widow with five young children. From the time of her departure from Skye until her death twenty-six years later she wrote and sang many songs - songs of sorrow for her (and others) exile from their homes and homeland, celebrations of landscape and people, and songs of hope for the future of her people - hope that those 'driven over the seas' would return to 'put back in place the cold stones of [our] broken down homes', and that 'the glens will be fertile again'.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> A. James Hammerton, 'We're Not Poms: The Shifting Identities of Post-war Scottish Migrants to Australia', in Angela McCarthy, (ed.), *A Global Clan: Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities Since the Eighteenth Century*, London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2006, p.240.

<sup>42</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Spaces of Dispersal', in Steven Vertovec, & Robin Cohen, (eds.) *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999. p.315.

<sup>43</sup> *The Songs of Mairi Mhor* (1821 - 1898), translated by John McGrath & Simon MacKenzie, Edinburgh: Greentrax Recordings, 1994.

Faistneachd agus Beannachd do na Gaidheil  
*A prophecy and a blessing to the Gaels*

Take this New Years Blessing  
 To every place where the Gaels are -  
 To Glenelg of the heroes  
 To Kintail and its great people  
 To the island of the Mist  
 I was not the only one to have to leave it

And when I'm between the boards  
 My words will be seen as a prophecy  
 For the children of our people  
 Driven over the seas will come back again  
 And the thieving lairds and landlords  
 Will be driven out as they were  
 The sheep and the deer will be cleared  
 And the glens will be fertile again  
 Time to sow, time to reap  
 And time for the thieves to get their reward  
 Time for us and our friends to put back in place  
 The cold stones of our broken down homes  
 And when New Years Day comes round  
 We'll see happiness for all of us.<sup>44</sup>

In a sense this prophecy has been fulfilled. While those 'driven over the seas' have not returned to 'put back in place the cold stones of [...] broken down homes', new homelands such as the Gaidhealtachd at Whangarei Heads have been created where connections to ancestral places and the events that happened there are remembered, and where these connections are celebrated in community with others of common ancestry. This has meant for some that the Gaidhealtachd is not only a 'homeland for New Zealand Celts',<sup>45</sup> but that it also provides a feeling of being 'at home'.

I first went to the Gaidhealtachd (Celtic Summer School) because my daughter had been and said, "Mum you **must!**"<sup>46</sup> Since then I have continued to attend because it was, and is, like going home.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *The Songs of Mairi Mhor*

<sup>45</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook.*

<sup>46</sup> Italics in original text by Jackie Davidson.

<sup>47</sup> Jackie Davidson, Fieldwork Project, 2004. The description of being 'at home' at the Gaidhealtachd was mentioned by a number of participants of the Research Project.



It is the 'clearly delimited space' of Whangarei Heads School which provides a place where the connection with a spatially and temporally distant homeland can be made through an understanding of the life of the original Scottish settlers who become a touchstone or exemplar. This is because, as mentioned by Belich, the Nova Scotian community was one in which difference persisted well into the twentieth century. Some of the activities which indicate a connection between the Gaidhealtachd and the Nova Scotian Scots of Whangarei Heads have been discussed in the previous chapter. These, such as the Gaidhealtachd Memorial Church Service and visits to Smugglers Bay commemorate and celebrate the settler community. Aside from the practical association between Whangarei Heads School and the Gaidhealtachd, Gaidhealtachd newsletters indicate that there is an ongoing supportive relationship between the two - that support and encouragement for remembrance of the schools 'roots and routes' is given by Gaidhealtachd participants. That this is interesting to, and has meaning for those who attend the Gaidhealtachd is demonstrated by an excerpt from a 2004 newsletter. This article, which is reproduced below, discusses the way in which the history of the school has been celebrated by a tribute to the settlers from Nova Scotia who founded the school in 1858 and which also represents future generations embracing the combined past and present cultures of the school. It is interesting in two ways. Firstly, the placing of a cultural icon (a sculpture in this instance) is similar to the way in which, for some Maori, the movement of cultural and geographical icons (Manaia for example) to Aotearoa can be understood as symbolic of migration and the key element for Maori in becoming *Tangatawhenua* (people of the land).<sup>48</sup> Secondly, the concept of future generations embracing the combined past and present cultures of the school is an unusual treatment of history. The 'true kiwi' style of the welcome was a powhiri, while the Gaelic song "*Mist Covered Mountains of Home*" (*Chi mi na Mor-Bheanna*) is a lament.

### **Whangarei Heads School Happenings**

When you arrive be sure to have a look at the cool & funky new sculpture by Annie Whiting (just before the covered courtyard). It commemorates the making of the film "Island Spirit" and is a tribute to the settlers from Nova Scotia who founded the school in 1858. This sculpture also represents future generations embracing the combined past & present cultures of the school, so it is particularly relevant to the Gaidhealtachd family who are nurturing the appreciation of all

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<sup>48</sup> Heiwari Johnson, Kaumatua, Pikiparia Marae, Kohukohu, Hokianga, 20 August, 2006.

things Celtic in our children. The rock, inscribed with Gaelic, is 150 million year old limestone which is awesome in its antiquity and most appropriate for its message of unity.

I am sure you all read about the incredible visit by Sir Edmund Hillary in November. What an experience for the kids! I hear he was welcomed not only in true kiwi style but also by the sounds of the Gaelic song "*Mist Covered Mountains of Home*" [*Chi mi na Mor-Bheanna*] which Dougie [Chowns] has been teaching the children. This is a significant achievement to have Gaelic spoken by children in the school again.<sup>49</sup>

This excerpt demonstrates again the emphasis placed on the speaking of Gaelic, not only as a signifier of a culture but also as a connection to that culture. The Gaidhealtachd newsletters, compiled and produced by the convenor of the coming years Gaidhealtachd, are the means, not only by which the people of the Gaidhealtachd keep in touch, request workshops for the next Gaidhealtachd, and advertise other events, but are also the means by which the community is held together for eleven months of the year. It is through the newsletters that connections between people and events are made. For the last few years this means of communication has been supplemented by the establishment by Wayne Laurence of Whangarei of the web based *Gaidhealtachd eNews Service* in 2002 which virtually links the community. Recently advertised in the Gaidhealtachd newsletter and by the *Gaidhealtachd eNews Service* are events such as the Tartan Day Celebrations held in Waipu in July, the 150th celebration of early European settlement and opening of Whangarei Heads School during Easter 2007, the annual Waipu Highland Games, the visit of the Aardvark Ceilidh Band to Hamilton, the visit of Brendon Power, a British based New Zealander who spent a few years accompanying *Riverdance*, and the upcoming art exhibitions at *Village Arts* in Kohukohu.

While the *Gaidhealtachd eNews Service* includes information on the Waipu Highland Games, the Highland Games website does not advertise the Gaidhealtachd, and although it's section on history talks extensively about Norman McLeod and the Nova Scotian settlers at Waipu, no mention is made of those at Whangarei Heads.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter, 2004.

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.highlandgames.co.nz/waipu> accessed 18-20 December 2006.

Interestingly, the description of the settlers from Nova Scotia on the Waipu Games website is given as 'Celtic peoples'.<sup>51</sup> This, and the inclusion at the games of displays and performances described as 'Celtic' by the *Northern Advocate*,<sup>52</sup> are an indication of a change in the perception of the Scots as belonging to the insular Celtic peoples and also of a inclusive Celtic *steidh* rather than a strictly traditional Scottish one for the games. An article in the *Northern Advocate* on Friday 5 January reported that the National Conference of Morris Dancers was currently being held in Whangarei.<sup>53</sup> Members of this group visited the Gaidhealtachd on Thursday 4 January to give a display and a talk on the history of Morris Dancing. Well received and thoroughly enjoyed by Gaidhealtachd participants, this visit enhanced the understanding of Celtic as an easily understood term which can be seen to denote an Ancient Briton heritage, and forged a link with those celebrating (albeit in a very different manner), a common cultural heritage.

The *Northern Advocate* has included articles on the Waipu Games between the 2-5 January annually for over fifty years.<sup>54</sup> These always follow the same format: results (2 January), pictures (3 January), and stories of interest (4 January). There have been correspondingly very few articles on the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School although a comprehensive report on the activities, history, and the Memorial Church Service which included photos appeared in the *Northern Advocate* on the 7 January 1993.<sup>55</sup> The reason for this lack of coverage is probably both because the Gaidhealtachd has not actively sought publicity in recent years as it is already oversubscribed, and also because the *Gaidhealtachd eNews Service* and newsletters can promote Gaidhealtachd and related activities to a niche audience in a more directed and efficient manner.<sup>56</sup>

Some of the notices in Gaidhealtachd newsletters and in the *Gaidhealtachd eNews Service* demonstrate that the Gaidhealtachd has made links with people outside of the

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.highlandgames.co.nz/waipu> accessed 18-20 December 2006.

<sup>52</sup> *Northern Advocate*, 3 January, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> *Northern Advocate*, 5 January, 2007.

<sup>54</sup> *Northern Advocate*, microfiche archives, Whangarei.

<sup>55</sup> *Northern Advocate*, 7 January, 1993.

<sup>56</sup> Although only 130 subscriber addresses on the *Gaidhealtachd eNews* mailing list these include many multiple households.

community and outside of New Zealand. Groups or guest speakers attending the Gaidhealtachd as guests of the Trust are not paid in any way, but as guests, are 'hosted' - they do not pay a registration fee and meals and accommodation are provided.

We are pleased and excited to announce that a Quebecois group, GENTICORUM, will be coming to the Summer School for three days as guests of the Trust. The band, Alexandre, Yann and Pascal, had heard such rave reviews of our Gaidhealtachd from Louise Evans, that they organised a small tour in Australia and have timed it so that they could come along and join us. They have also wanted to get to the Antipodes and play their music upside down! Quebecois traditional music has its origins in the ballads of Normandy in France and Quebec's Irish immigrants turned these melodies into foot stomping reels and jigs.<sup>57</sup>

Other events advertised are created by people from the Gaidhealtachd. The Gaidhealtachd booklet says that 'the dream is that the Gaidhealtachd will lead to other initiatives and help to establish networks that make Celtic cultural initiatives in Aotearoa/New Zealand more easily accomplished'.<sup>58</sup> This desire has been realised with the establishment in 1993 of the Annual Kohukohu Ceilidh Weekend (April or May). Other examples of Celtic festivals include the Annual River Celts Celebrations (Hamilton) usually in June, regular monthly *ceilidhs* in Mongonui and Kerikeri, and others. A number of Celtic music groups have also developed from the Gaidhealtachd - the *Hokianga Pipe Band*, the *Gaidhealtachd Pipe Band*, *Feak* (contemporary folk including mostly Celtic and Scandanavian) with Louise Evans on fiddle which currently plays at the *Dogs Bollix* and the *121 Café* in Auckland, the Auckland based Celtic band *S'Math sin*, and the *Ceilidh Anywhere Band* - a group of musicians all of whom are Gaidhealtachd participants who travel to *ceilidh* to provide music, call dances, and act as Master of Ceremonies for communities who wish to host a *ceilidh*. In February 2007 a number of Gaidhealtachd based musicians played alongside Reggae bands and Kapa Haka groups at the Waitangi Festival. These include: *Clararsich* (Harps), *S'Math sin*, the *Ceilidh Band*, Bain McGregor (bagpipes), *Feak* (Swedish and Celtic contemporary folk), and *Green Ginger* (gypsy).<sup>59</sup> Although there was no mention in the local

<sup>57</sup> Gaidhealtachd Newsletter, 3, 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Gaidhealtachd Booklet.

<sup>59</sup> Gaidhealtachd eNews Service, January, 2007.

newspaper of the individual groups playing at the Waitangi Festival, posters distributed extensively throughout the Far North listed the musicians as above. The inclusion of so many artists who are part of the Gaidhealtachd community in the Waitangi weekend celebrations is an indication that, at least in the Far North, connections are being made between cultures through the medium of music and the common desire to preserve and celebrate cultural identity.

The Kohukohu Ceilidh Weekend, with workshops, music sessions, and a *ceilidh* evening, is like a mini Gaidhealtachd and will be in its fourteenth year in 2007. It is well attended by local people, both Maori and Pakeha, as well as those from the Gaidhealtachd. The *ceilidh* evening with its mixture of dancing and musical items, is particularly well attended by local Maori, and is for some the first time that they have experienced anything which could be understood as 'Pakeha culture' - culture as interpreted by Maori, rather than the more mainstream rugby, racing or religious manifestations of 'culture' practised by many New Zealanders. The weekend provides what Larry Jenkins describes in an article 'Clans Gather in Kohukohu' in the 'Arts on a Wednesday' section of the *Northern News* as 'a meeting of cultures'.<sup>60</sup>

The opening powhiri was the tenderest and most touching I've ever attended, with its references to how important the meeting of the two cultures - Maori and Celtic European - is to the people of the Hokianga and the fact that they meld into one another in an air of co-operation. [...] Next year will be the tenth anniversary of the event, and I'll certainly mark it on my own calendar and advise anyone who wants a really fulfilling weekend to do the same, regardless of your ancestry.<sup>61</sup>

It is perhaps the events and other initiatives created by the people of the Gaidhealtachd rather than the Gaidhealtachd itself which make Celtic cultural initiatives in New Zealand more easily accessible to a wider group of people, and even more importantly, which make the living of a culture more visible. It is arguable that it is in this way that some form of cultural understanding can be arrived at that will make the bicultural

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<sup>60</sup> *Northern News*, 18 May, 2002.

<sup>61</sup> *Northern News*, 18 May, 2002.

proposition a reality in New Zealand with some Pakeha 'putting their hands up',<sup>62</sup> and unashamedly celebrating their cultural heritage with others of dissimilar backgrounds. The 'living inside but with a difference' ethos of the Gaidhealtachd diasporic community does not imply a separatist agenda but just a difference which, as James Clifford says, relates to the community having a sense of being a 'people with historical roots and destinies outside the time/space of the host nation'.<sup>63</sup> Clifford also points to the mediating role that such communities can fulfil.

Whatever their eschatological longings, diaspora communities are "not-here" to stay. Diaspora cultures thus mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place. If we think of displaced populations in almost any large city, the transnational urban swirl recently analysed by Ulf Hannerz (1992), the role for mediating cultures of this kind will be apparent.<sup>64</sup>

While it has to be admitted that the diaspora discourse of Clifford (and others) relate primarily to diaspora of a different time/space or nature to that of the British Imperial one, because many of the components are similar, there is no reason that the same conceptual framework cannot be used. It is in the events conducted outside, but created by association with, the annual Summer School, that the diasporic community of the Gaidhealtachd could be seen to perform this function of mediation. In *Signifying Identities*, Robin Cohen points also to the way in which the Celtic peoples could provide a positive example for the understanding of a future multi-cultural world society:

The Celts, predominately a stateless people from their origins, are, I would argue, given their widely differentiated distribution in the world, an exemplar for the conundrum of the human condition generally: that is, where there is much persuasive prehistoric or ahistoric evidence for one-ness, for conjunction, there have also intervened many arguments, anchored mainly in the political economy of historical struggle, for disjunction. And yet the wide distribution of related yet stateless people may be a heuristic model for a future, more diversely integrated world, a future less troubled by the egocentric centrality's of the nation state or the related arguments for prototypically [...]<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Hamish Keith, Radio New Zealand, 3rd December, 2006.

<sup>63</sup> James Clifford, 'Diaspora', p. 223.

<sup>64</sup> James Clifford, 'Diaspora', p.224.

<sup>65</sup> Robin Cohen, *Signifying Identities*, London: Routledge, 2000, p.119.



As mentioned in Chapter One, the concept of the Celtic Summer School was in part inspired by a visit in 1987 by Gaidhealtachd founders, Doug and Meg Chowns, to St. Anns Gaelic College in Nova Scotia. This visit was inspired by Doug and Megs interest in Scottish culture and history, and by the history of the Whangarei Heads area and the Nova Scotian settlers. Some connection with the area remains with people from Nova Scotia occasionally attending the Summer School. The interest expressed in the developments and activities of the Whangarei Heads community by the people of Nova Scotia in the late nineteenth century can be seen in the opening words of John Munro's letter of 2nd June 1896 titled 'From New Zealand' in which he says, 'I understand that your readers enjoy the letters I send you about the situation in this country and the things that happen'.<sup>66</sup> That this interest is still there is evident in an article written in 1996 entitled 'Seventh Summer for Kiwi Gaidhealtachd' in the Nova Scotian newspaper *Am Braighe*.<sup>67</sup>

Dr. Angus MacDonald of Glenuig, a world class piper now resident at Portree, Skye, was a particularly welcome participant at the seventh annual Gaidhealtachd Celtic Summer School, January 2-7, at Whangarei Heads, New Zealand. Dr. MacDonald accepted an invitation to become patron of the organisation and composed a tune for the Summer School, the McKenzie Bay Jig. Another overseas participant was Dugald MacPhee, originally from Barra, but for twenty years a Nova Scotia resident. The Summer School attracted 150 people - the most the venue, a school in the small coastal village, can handle. They came from all around New Zealand for a week of daytime workshops and evening *ceilidh*. Workshops were held in a range of subjects, including history, Gaelic language and song, visual arts, and a range of performing arts. Unique was a pilot workshop in ritual art by Douglas Chowns.[...] <sup>68</sup>

Although Dr. Angus MacDonald, as patron, has not again attended the Gaidhealtachd, he does, without fail, send New Years greetings and best wishes for the Summer School every year on the 2nd January. Another person who was connected to the Gaidhealtachd until his death in 1998 was The Rev. Roderick (Roddy) MacDonald of North Usit, Scotland, who prepared the audio tape for the re-enactment of the Gaelic church service in McLeod Bay Church in 1994. Rev. Roddy was crowned Literary Bard of An Coman

<sup>66</sup> John Munro, *Mac-Tulla*, Sydney, Cape Breton, 25 December 1896.

<sup>67</sup> *Am Braighe*, Mabou, Cape Breton: Sandy Publishing. *Am Braighe* (a higher ground) is a quarterly journal focusing on the oral traditions and history of the North American Gaels and on the taking of the Gaelic language and culture to a 'brae' or higher ground.

<http://www.lbiblio.org/Gaelic/Albannuadh/4.1.html> accessed 18-20 December 2006.

Gaidlicalach in 1997, (bard of the Gaelic speaking area of Scotland), published a complete work of Robbie Burns poetry in 1992, two books of his own original Gaelic poetry, two books of hymn translations into Gaelic, and travelled both Scotland and Ireland promoting the cause of the Gaelic language.<sup>69</sup>

Connections have been made with musicians outside New Zealand as the example of the band GENTICORUM from Quebec demonstrates. Pete Grassby of the UK based Aardvark Ceilidh Band has attended the Summer School while in New Zealand to perform at the Folk Festival in Auckland on Auckland Anniversary Weekend for a number of years. While connections with, and visits from people outside of New Zealand are welcomed by Gaidhealtachd participants, it appears from newsletters and the *Gaidhealtachd eNews Service* that it is the links with fellow members and the annual coming together of people with common interests within New Zealand who 'want to explore their own and related Celtic cultures in the spirit of rediscovery and redirection made possible in the unique context of Aotearoa/New Zealand',<sup>70</sup> first expressed by the founders in 1989, that remains of prime importance.

It has been mentioned earlier that although *feis* and other similar festivals which celebrate culture are held in Scotland, Wales (*eistedfod*), and Ireland, these are not pan-Celtic. While the World Wide Net lists thousands of sites under the search word 'Celtic' and hundreds under 'Celtic Festival', these also are not similar to the Gaidhealtachd Summer School in that they are mostly based on some spiritual concept of an idealised Celtic pagan nature, or, have used the word Celtic to sell a product or belief. Moreover, none seem to offer, in the same way as the Gaidhealtachd, an educational agenda agenda itself another example of the Scottish legacy in New Zealand and more particularly the Gaidhealtachd. There are two notable exceptions to this. These are the Gaelic College in Nova Scotia and the community of Glen Innes in New South Wales, Australia, although in neither case can an argument for real similarity be made. St.

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<sup>68</sup> *Am Braighe*, An t-Earrach/Spring, 1996, p.9.

<sup>69</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>70</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Booklet*.

Ann's College advertises itself as 'The Gaelic College of Celtic Arts and Crafts',<sup>71</sup> but both the word Gaelic and the words of greeting (*failte dhan a' Cholaisde Ghaidhlig* - welcome to the Gaelic College of Arts),<sup>72</sup> betray the fact that Celtic in this instance actually means Scottish. This is confirmed by the statement that the college was opened in 1938 as a 'school devoted to the study and preservation of the Gaelic language, arts and culture'.<sup>73</sup> The Gaidhealtachd, in taking inspiration from St. Ann's College, has transmitted some of the ideas it incorporates, but adapted them to a New Zealand situation.

The other example, that of the community of Glen Innes in New South Wales, does not offer a Summer School, but has an annual Celtic Festival. The similarity here is both to the pan-Celtic nature of the celebration, and also to the community in which this celebration of Celtic culture is held. Apart from the Glen Innes Australian Celtic Festival held annually in May, the community also has a circle of standing stones which are 'intended as a tribute to the Celtic peoples who contributed to the development of Australia and who were important in the early European history of the district'.<sup>74</sup> Based on Ring of Brodgar, a megalithic stone circle in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland, these stones, like the original ones, are a seasonal clock and mark both the Summer and Winter Solstices. The town was named after Major Archibald Clunes Innes the original owner of the station on which the town was sited in 1851, and who was the former commandant of the Port MacQuarie penal settlement.<sup>75</sup> Other names in the town indicate settlement by people from the insular Celtic countries of Wales (Gwydir Highway, Severn River) and particularly Scotland (Glencoe, Glen Nevis, Craigieburn Tourist Park, the Clansman Motel and the Ben Lomand Station and Ben Lomand Mountain Range). There is also a Stonehenge Station whose original owner, Thomas Hewitt, settled and named in 1838.<sup>76</sup> There is an indication here that a similarity could be drawn between the Nova Scotian community of Whangarei Heads and Glen Innes in that both were settled by people whose memory lives on both in the names of places and also in the events that take place there. The Gaidhealtachd however, remains as far as

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.gaeliccollege.edu/index.php> accessed 15 December 2006.

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.gaeliccollege.edu/index.php> accessed 15 December 2006.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.gaeliccollege.edu/index.php> accessed 15 December 2006.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.theage.com.au/news/New-South-Wales/Glen-Innes/2005> accessed 18 December 2006.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.theage.com.au/news/New-South-Wales/Glen-Innes/2005> accessed 18 December 2006.

research has indicated, as a unique gathering and one in which, it could be argued, that the disarticulation of displacement, detachment and dispersal has been replaced by a context of rearticulation - 'how the local is produced and what forms it takes in the space of dispersal'.<sup>77</sup>

The Gaidhealtachd is both a community inside (the nation) but with a difference, and also a community which is bounded by difference where there is a possibility of both conjunction and disjunction. In this sense it could also be interpreted as mediating between these two being the place where 'our national [or Celtic in this instance] culture provides a moment of self-recognition through we both confirm our individual existence and become conscious of ourselves as having a collective existence'.<sup>78</sup> This statement is particularly relevant to the identities of the descendants of the British Anglo/Celtic Imperial diaspora and was experienced metaphorically by Hamish Keith as he flew above the Rakaia River as the 'braids of the Rakaia River were like the many strands of New Zealand identity - they all began in the mountains and ended in the sea, but each wound it's individual way to the common destination'.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> <http://www.theage.com.au/news/New-South-Wales/Glen-Innes/2005> accessed 18 December 2006.

<sup>77</sup> Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Spaces of Dispersal', p.315.

<sup>78</sup> Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity*, London: Routledge, 1999, p.14.

<sup>79</sup> Hamish Keith, National Radio, 3 December, 2006.

## Conclusion

*New Zealand is not a society where there is a single national identity. It ought really to consider itself quite lucky to have a number of them.*<sup>1</sup>

This thesis has examined the history of the Gaidhealtachd as a culturally based spatially diffuse and temporally different community with the concept of Celtic as the key motif. It has considered several themes. These include the way history itself is used, the process of transmission and adaptation of cultural concepts in a New Zealand context, the application of the language of diasporic discourse to the settler population of New Zealand, how culturally based communities are created, sustained, and how they develop, how some New Zealanders have addressed the issue of Pakeha identity, and the proposition that in order to explain the formation of New Zealand identity there is a place for a focus on informal processes.

Chapter One considered the history of Whangarei Heads School and the Whangarei Heads area generally in the context of a creation story of the Gaidhealtachd. It demonstrated how this history has been an integral part of the formation and development of the Gaidhealtachd community and that an understanding of the history of the Gaelic speaking Nova Scotian settlers has become a touchstone for both the understanding of history in general and also in how it is interpreted on a personal level. It also concluded that the Gaidhealtachd community was successfully established as a result of a combination three things: the right people - determined and inspirational leaders such as Doug and Meg Chowns, the right time - when issues of cultural identity were a prominent part of New Zealand discourse, and the right place - Whangarei Heads. Chapter One also discussed Whangarei Heads School as the clearly delimited space outside that of the national framework but within it's boundaries, which was occupied in 1856 by the original settlers and founders of the school, and since 1990 by the Gaidhealtachd. It concluded that the Gaidhealtachd was a diasporic community in that the clearly delimited space of Whangarei Heads in which the Summer School takes place for seven days annually is considered the 'homeland' of the Gaidhealtachd.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Oliver, Interview with Malcolm Wood, Massey Alumni Magazine, *New Zealand Historical Association Newsletter*, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2000, p.39.

Chapter Two discussed the concept of Celtic as the key theme underlying a spatially diffuse, temporally different community. It examined how the word Celtic has been interpreted in New Zealand since the late nineteenth century, how it is interpreted by participants of the Gaidhealtachd, and how these interpretations have been influenced by, or differ from, overseas perceptions. It also included an overview of the present debate surrounding the existence of the insular Celtic peoples of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Chapter Two concluded that the theme of Celtic as the key concept underlying a spatially diffuse, temporally different community has provided a context through which issues of identity can be examined and that the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School at Whangarei Heads has supplied a venue at which this can be achieved. The history of the Gaidhealtachd can be considered therefore as a case study of why and how some people have addressed issues of cultural identity in post-colonial New Zealand.

Chapter Three examined the practices of the Gaidhealtachd - what is done and what meaning this has for those involved. By an examination of the organisational framework, the practices and activities, ceremonies and traditions of the Gaidhealtachd, this chapter demonstrated how the theme of Celtic has provided the fundamental context through which a cultural community has been created, sustained and has developed. The argument presented for an understanding of the Gaidhealtachd as a bounded community concluded that the temporal boundary of the 2nd - 7th January, the spatial boundary of Whangarei Heads School, and the symbolic boundary of the inclusive Celtic *steidh*, has created a community which has, as described by Cohen, 'a commonality of form (ways of behaving) and content (meaning).'<sup>3</sup> It has been shown that the Gaidhealtachd is a community as defined by Anthony Cohen (in *The Symbolic Construction of Community*), - one which incorporates the centrality of the symbolic dimension of community as its defining characteristic, and one which emphasises the meaning of community as a system of values and moral codes which gives its members a sense of identity within a bounded whole.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.21.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Cohen, p.9.



Chapter Four discussed connections between the nineteenth century immigrants to New Zealand from the insular Celtic countries and their descendants, between the Gaidhealtachd and Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotian community of Whangarei Heads, between the individual people of the Gaidhealtachd, between the initiatives and networks established by the Gaidhealtachd, and between the Gaidhealtachd and other organisations. It argued that through these connections the people of the Gaidhealtachd have created and sustained a community which demonstrates one way in which diasporic consciousness has emerged and evolved in its spaces of dispersal. It has also indicated that, as part of a world wide diaspora community of Celtic ancestry, the Gaidhealtachd is probably a unique group.

Bernard Cohn says that: "the reason an anthropologist studies history is that it is only in retrospect, after observing the structure and its transformations, that it is possible to know the nature of the structure".<sup>5</sup> While this maxim can be applied equally to issues of cultural identity in that the key to the understanding of Pakeha culture is in the study of its history, this thesis has demonstrated that the use of the literature, methods, and concepts of Social Anthropology can provide useful information for the historian. By the accessing and understanding of the lived experience of a group of individuals - by giving agency to particular lives (the people of the Gaidhealtachd), rather than an understanding of history based on larger themes, it is hoped that this thesis has offered insights which both contribute to current understanding of New Zealand identity and which also go some way towards addressing the issue of the lack of cultural histories in New Zealand identified by Jock Phillips.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the methods of Social Anthropology, an understanding of the lived experience of the people of the Gaidhealtachd has been accessed through the fragmentary and only written records of the Gaidhealtachd - the *Gaidhealtachd Scrapbook*, the *Gaidhealtachd* booklet, the *Gaidhealtachd Memorial Church Service*

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard Cohn quoted in Marshall Sahlins, Goodbye to Tristes Tropes: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History, *Journal of Modern History*, 1993, 65:1-25, p.1.

<sup>6</sup> Jock Phillips, 'Of Verandahs and Fish and Chips and Footie on Saturday Afternoon', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 24, 2 (Oct. 1990), p.134.

*Programme*, and Gaidhealtachd newsletters 1989-2006. Although Alun Munslow and Keith Jenkins maintain in *The Nature of History Reader* that 'it is possible to characterise all historical writings as one of three basic types, basic genres [...] reconstructionist, constructionist or deconstructionist',<sup>7</sup> this thesis has in part deconstructed fragmentary written records in order to achieve a qualified reconstruction of the history of the Gaidhealtachd. Deconstruction and reconstruction are not necessarily therefore mutually exclusive, and can be seen here to inform one another. The benefits gained from the processes of deconstruction can provide a glimpse of how some New Zealanders have understood their cultural history and how they celebrate it today.

This history of the Gaidhealtachd is neither a local or a regional history, nor is it a public history, but rather that of a quasi-organisation or group, as defined by A. G. Johnson in the *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology*,<sup>8</sup> and contains elements of both public and local history. The question of where to position this thesis raises two issues. Firstly, it may indicate a need in some instances to decentre local history. W. J. Gardner has called for a closer union of regional and social history<sup>9</sup> and the study of the Gaidhealtachd has indicated that a closer union of local and social (or perhaps cultural) history could also provide an insight into the formation of New Zealand identities. While this thesis has included a partial history of the Whangarei Heads community (the local), the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School, although informed by the history of the local area, is not a local group. Secondly, it is possible that a closer focus on informal group processes such as that of the culturally based community of the Gaidhealtachd rather than an emphasis on key acts of legislation or allegedly significant public/private statements by individuals or organisations may also increase the understanding of the formation of New Zealand identities. The use and influence of history in general, and the history of Whangarei Heads in particular, has been integral in the formation of the Gaidhealtachd Celtic Studies Summer School as a cultural

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<sup>7</sup> Keith Jenkins and Alun Munslow (eds.), *The Nature of History Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> A. G. Johnson, *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology*, pp.138 -139.

<sup>9</sup> W. J. Gardner, *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History*, Christchurch: Regional Press, 1999, p.81.

community. The Gaidhealtachd has defined itself by reference to a combination of global, local, and cultural history, as also has this thesis.

The Gaidhealtachd could be seen as a post colonial response to issues of Pakeha identity in New Zealand although research has indicated that this is not the understanding of those involved. Statements made in the *Gaidhealtachd* booklet regarding the importance of the need to address cultural issues in New Zealand, and the understanding of ones own culture as enhancing the understanding of the culture of others, are an indication however of the founders perception of the importance of culture and identity in post-colonial New Zealand. In other excerpts from Gaidhealtachd literature - newsletters in particular - there is an underlying suggestion of some sort of affinity with Maori, although this is not explicit and is related mainly to common historical experiences of forced evictions, the loss of language, and the enjoyment of music, song, and dance. There is however, one striking similarity between Maori and the people of the Gaidhealtachd. If to Maori the movement of cultural and geographical icons (Manaia for example) to Aotearoa can be understood as symbolic of migration and the key element for Maori in becoming *Tangatawhenua*, (people of the land),<sup>10</sup> to those of the Gaidhealtachd the celebration of the traditions of their Scots, Irish and Welsh forefathers and the cultural icons now present in the grounds of Whangarei Heads School (knot, pole and other artwork), could be interpreted in a similar manner. In other words, the transference and adaptation of cultural forms is an important part of their New Zealand identity - of 'living inside (the nation), but with a difference'.<sup>11</sup>

Bill Oliver has written that: 'New Zealand is not a society where there is a single national identity. It ought really to consider itself quite lucky to have a number of them'.<sup>12</sup> For the participants of the Gaidhealtachd, a multi-cultural New Zealand identity is indeed a matter for celebration. The opinion expressed by Louise Evans in Chapter Two that: 'I believe a New Zealand Celt can actually be a wonderful hybrid, what with

<sup>10</sup> Heiwari Johnson, Kaumatua, Pikiparia Marae, Kohukohu, Hokianga, 20 August, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> James Clifford, 'Diasporas' in Steven Vertovec & Robin Cohen, (eds.), *Migration, Diasporas and Transnationalism*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 1999, p.221.

<sup>12</sup> Bill Oliver, Interview with Malcolm Wood, Massey Alumni Magazine, *New Zealand Historical Association Newsletter*, Palmerston North: Massey University, 2000, p.39.

having to deal with a new environment yet holding onto the firm traditions of the forebears countries. I am, in opinion and values, very much a New Zealander, which I am actually very glad of. It's wonderful to be able to have both',<sup>13</sup> has been endorsed by many of the Gaidhealtachd participants. This research has revealed that, with reference to the Gaidhealtachd community, the concept of a New Zealand Celt is not a conflict in terms, but rather this is what it means to be a New Zealander - an acknowledgement of a pre-history which is 'linked to, but still separable, from the process of intermingling and the foundational myths that resulted within a territory that becomes a homeland displaced or created for respective indigenous and arrivals'.<sup>14</sup> Unlike the mainstream New Zealand culture described by James Belich in *Paradise Reforged*, the people of the Gaidhealtachd, with their love and celebration of all forms of music and dance, are definitely not 'a people without songs'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Louise Evans, Social Anthropology 303 Fieldwork Project, Massey University, 2004, pp.9-15.

<sup>14</sup> David Pearson, *The Politics of Ethnicity in Settler Society.: States of Unease*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, p.6.

<sup>15</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.325.

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