



WIN WITH 'WE ARE VERTIGO' - PAGE 16

Ulster-Scots Agency (Boord o' Ulster-Scotch) official publication

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 23, 2019

All set for Ulster-Scots Language Week



IS ULSTER-SCOTS THE REAL STAR OF CHANNEL FOUR HIT SITCOM DERRY GIRLS?

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VETERAN SCOTS LANGUAGE CAMPAIGNER BILLY KAY DELIVERS LECTURE THIS LEID WEEK

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SOCIAL MEDIA SENSATION ALISTAIR HEATHER PRESENTS SERIES ON YOUNG ULSTER-SCOTS

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Fair faa ye



Fair faa ye to this Special Edition of The Ulster-Scot, which has been put together as a guide to Ulster-Scotch Leid Week / Ulster-Scots Language Week, which will be taking place from November 25 to November 30.

We have put together a varied programme of activities to raise awareness of the Ulster-Scots language, which will be taking place around the country. These will include talks about the language and in the language, opportunities for people of all ages to get involved with the Hamely Tongue and find out more about what's happening here and in Scotland.

We will be launching several important new resources to help people recognise and understand the Ulster-Scots that they see and hear around them every day, including a new When o Wurds badge, which will be available free of charge to those who have, you guessed it, a when o wurds in Ulster-Scots.

It's great that a number of local Councils, including Lisburn and Castlereagh; Antrim and Newtownabbey; Mid Ulster; Derry and Strabane; and Fermanagh and Omagh have also come on board to support Ulster-Scots Language Week and we look forward to building on this in the future.

We are particularly pleased to have a number of high profile participants from Scotland, including the Scots Language pioneer Billy Kay, former SLC Director Michael Hance and the award-winning Scots poet Stuart Paterson, who will be leading a masterclass for Ulster-Scots writers on St Andrew's Day, November 30.

The Ulster-Scots language is part of who we are. Everyone in Northern Ireland has some Ulster-Scots, the only problem is they don't know it when they see it. We want you to recognise your ability in Ulster-Scots and embrace it. Please come along and get involved.

Ian Crozier is Chief Executive of the Ulster-Scots Agency

The Ulster-Scot

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Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch

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To keep up to date with the latest news and
events visit www.ulsterscotsagency.com

Leid Week events at a glance...

The Ulster-Scots Agency is delighted to reveal a packed programme of events to mark our inaugural Ulster-Scots Language Week.

Throughout Northern Ireland and County Donegal, people of all ages and backgrounds will be celebrating the living language of Ulster-Scots. There is a wide choice of activities as detailed below, to give everyone the opportunity to embrace and engage with the Hamely Tongue in a range of ways.

Monday, November 25 2019

Tracing the Ulster-Scots Imagination - Professor Wesley Hutchinson on how Ulster-Scots have expressed themselves through their writing.
Tower Museum, Londonderry, 1pm.

Ramsay, Percy, Ferguson and Hewitt - An evening of poetry to launch the new Ulster-Scots Collectors' Project.
Canada Room, QUB, 7pm.

Quare Crack - A when o yarns with Willie Hill and Alistair Scott Ceilidh Band.
Ballyclare Town Hall, 7pm.

A Gaitherin o Yarns - An evening of poetry and storytelling. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Raphoe, 7.30pm.**

Tuesday, November 26, 2019

The cross community pedigree of Ulster-Scots - Professor Wesley Hutchinson challenges the myth that Ulster-Scots is only for Protestants. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 11am.**

Exploring the Scots Language Award - Discussion / workshop for educators. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 2pm.**

Ulster-Scots Leid Workshop - Exploring our language. **Glenelly Room, Strabane Council Offices, 2pm.**

Ulster-Scots Leid Workshop - Exploring our language. **Pogues Entry, 7.30pm.**

Ulster-Scots Leid Workshop - Exploring our language. **Ardrhown Theatre, Enniskillen, 8pm**

Wednesday, November 27, 2019

Ulster-Scots and Human Rights - Les Allamby, chair of NIHRRC discusses the human rights of Ulster-Scots. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 10am.**

Hands Across the Sea - Former Scots Language Centre Director Michael Hance discusses latest developments with the mother tongue. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 2pm.**

Oan baith sides o the Sheuch - Billy Kay talks about the Scots leid in Scotland and Ulster. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 7pm.**

Ulster-Scots Leid Workshop - Exploring our language. **Strule Arts Centre, Omagh, 8pm.**

Thursday, November 28, 2019

Ulster-Scots Leid Workshop - Exploring our language. **Andrew Jackson Cottage, Carrickfergus, 10am.**

A Celebration of the Ulster-Scots Language - With the weans of Newtown Stewart Model Primary School. **Newtown Stewart Library, 2pm.**

Shune Far Prettier Than Shoes - A celebration of Ulster-Scots poetry by Dr Frank Ferguson. **Ranfurly House, Dungannon, 7.30pm.**

Ulster-Scots Leid Workshop - Exploring our language. **Andrew Jackson Cottage, Carrickfergus, 10am.**

Friday, November 29, 2019

The history, heritage and language of the Ulster-Scots - Talk by Deirdre Speer-White. **Tower Museum, Londonderry, 10.30am.**

Robert Dinsmore, the Rustic Poet of



New Hampshire - Alister McReynolds on the life and work of a Scotch-Irish poet of Ulster-Scots. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 11am.**

Shune Far Prettier Than Shoes - A celebration of Ulster-Scots poetry by Dr Frank Ferguson. **Linen Hall Library, Belfast, 1pm.**

Saturday, November 30, 2019

Bletherin an Scribevin wi Stuart Paterson - All-day writing workshop with award-winning Scots poet Stuart A Paterson. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Belfast, 10.30am to 5.00pm. Lunch included.**

Ulster-Scots Lunctime Recital - Performance of poetry & music. **Lisburn Museum**

Weans' Wurds - Craft workshop using Ulster-Scots language. **Discover Ulster-Scots Centre, Raphoe, 10am & 2pm.**

Willie Drennan & his Hillbilly Band - A quare night's crack. **Square Box, Dungannon, 8pm. Price £12.**

CLICK ON THIS...



For details of what's on check out our events calendar - www.ulsterscotsagency.com/events

For Ulster-Scots news - www.ulsterscotsagency.com/news

To sign up for the Ulster-Scots E-Newsletter - visit www.ulsterscotsagency.com/newsletter/ **subscribe/register** your details and receive updates on the areas that you are most interested.

Join us on Facebook - visit www.facebook.com/UlsterScotsAgency now and like our page to keep up to date on what's happening, upload your photos from Ulster-Scots events and share your comments.



WORD OF THE ISSUE

Scribeve

Meaning:

To write, especially to write easily and copiously

Is Ulster-Scots the real star of hit Channel Four show Derry Girls?

Derry Girls is one of the most successful television comedies to emerge from Northern Ireland in the last couple of years.

Set during the Troubles in 1990s Londonderry it follows the often disgraceful antics of a group of teenage friends as they negotiate the complicated worlds of growing up, families and school. Balancing an acute awareness of the stresses of teenage friendship against the bleak backdrop of the conflict in Ulster, Derry Girls has charmed audiences with the strong performances of its ensemble cast and the sharp and brilliant writing of Lisa McGee. The show has already clocked up two very well-received seasons which have chronicled the lives of Erin, Orla, Clare, Michelle and James and their families.

One of the most refreshing aspects of the programme is the way in which the everyday speech of the city is employed in the programme. Despite the occasional confused viewer requesting subtitles, the show is a celebration of the vibrancy, creativity and potency of the local tongue. One can find glossaries across the internet that provide translations for the uninitiated. Pity the person who thinks that wee buns will follow the main course of a Tayto cheese and onion sandwich or a 'Chicken Ball Special.' As one might expect of a show that blends the hormone fuelled teenage years



Derry Girls Mural, Orchard Street, Londonderry

with the vocabulary of Tarantino, the language is often earthy and to the point, so perhaps not to everyone's taste. But it also helps remind us of how powerful the local register can be for saying exactly what is on our mind.

And what is the best thing about Derry Girls? The writing? Cast? Locations? Yes all of these are spot on. But what emerges as the strongest contender for star of the

show is in fact Ulster-Scots. There's the ubiquitous wee and weans and the Derry wan for one. Fired off in all their unselfconscious glory these words, as Seamus Heaney said, are: "irreducible, undislodgable and undeniably true." They help drive what is at the heart of the great energy of the show. People dander, they santer, they houl things. They hoke and deuk and slabber; and when things go bad may even boke.

There's poor craiturs all over the place and those that put their nebs where they shouldn't, hi. Mind, there's many that get foundered and unfortunates who take cack-attacks! While every phrase that's used can't be said to be derived from Ulster-Scots, the show highlights how integral and alive Ulster-Scots words and phrases are to the language of Derry Girls. It comes across very well as a vital, living

urban phenomenon speaking from the heart in one of the most popular television programmes in the United Kingdom in the last two years. **Dr Frank Ferguson is Distinguished Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer in English; Research Director of English Language and Literature; and Director of the Centre for Irish and Scottish Studies at Ulster University.**

A Gaitherin O Yarns set to take place in Donegal for Leid Week

When speaking to someone from the East Donegal, especially the area known as the Laggan, you might be forgiven for thinking that they are actually from some part of County Down or Antrim, such is the richness of the Ulster-Scots language spoken there.

As the Ulster-Scots have continued to live in a tightly-knit community, there was little need to change their manner of speech and so it has continued to the present day.

The speech of the Laggan was captured in the writings of poets like Sarah Leech and Frances Browne of Stranorlar.

The daughter of a linen weaver, Sarah Leech was born near Raphoe, County Donegal, and is one of the few published women writers in the Ulster-Scots tradition of that era.

Beyond the biographical account contained in her only published collection, Poems on Various



Bronze Statue of Frances Browne in Stranorlar

Subjects (1828), very little more is known about her. Her staunch

unionism and Protestantism are evidenced by poems such as 'The Brunswick Clubs' and 'Progress of the Reformation'. Sarah's 'weaver poetry' is genuinely impressive and unfortunately undervalued. Frances Browne was the daughter of the village postmaster who lost her sight at aged only 18 months as a result of smallpox. Despite this, and the lack of a formal education, Frances developed a great love of learning and began to write poems and short stories. In addition to a number of books, Frances contributed to periodicals including Chambers' Edinburgh Journal and The Athenaeum.

The Ulster-Scots language is still spoken widely in East Donegal and there is a growing interest among local people to recognise their linguistic heritage, with an evening of Ulster-Scots poetry and storytelling, entitled A Gaitherin o Yarns, set to take place in the East Donegal Discover Ulster-Scots

Human Rights Chief to give Language Week Lecture

The programme for Ulster-Scots Language Week will include a lecture and discussion on Ulster-Scots and Human Rights, with Les Allamby, Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

Agency CEO Ian Crozier said: "Ulster-Scots people and the Ulster-Scots language have a range of protections which flow from international treaties agreed by the UK government, however it can often appear that these can be of limited use or that they are of less value than the rights and protections that other minorities enjoy. "This session with the Chief Commissioner of NIHRC is important because it will help the Ulster-Scots community to better understand how the human rights system relates to us and how we might better use it to strengthen the position of Ulster-Scots.

"We also hope that rather than be a one off, we will be able to work with Les and his colleagues to develop a meaningful, long-term

engagement between the Ulster-Scots community and the NI Human Rights Commission.

"For too many years, the Ulster-Scots community has been wary of human rights, thinking of it as something for other people, even though Ulster-Scots people have always been to the forefront of advances around human dignity. "That has to change. We need to embrace human rights and build capacity within our communities to address cultural issues from a rights perspective."

Les Allamby is due to serve as Chief Commissioner of NIHRC until August 31, 2021. Les is a solicitor and formerly the Director of the Law Centre (Northern Ireland). He was appointed honorary Professor of Law at the University of Ulster in 2014 and he was a trustee of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland from 2009-2018.

The event is due to take place on Tuesday, November 26 in the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre.

Launch of the Ulster-Scots Collectors Project announced

Ulster-Scots Language Week will see the launch of a new digital Ulster-Scots Collectors Project, which has been developed as a partnership with Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University and the Ulster-Scots Agency to build an online collection of Ulster-Scots and Scottish literary and linguistic materials based on the collections of four significant Ulster-based collectors: Thomas Percy, Samuel Ferguson, Andrew Gibson, and John Hewitt.

The project has been led by Dr Frank Ferguson of Ulster University, who said: "These collectors represent 300 years of significant interaction between Ulster and Scottish literature, culture, heritage and book history.

"Each individual enjoyed an international reputation as a critic and collector of vernacular literature and all played a major role in developing our understanding of poetry, song and literary heritage. "They were pioneers in their fields who changed the way in which we view Irish and Scottish literature today and it is exciting to see their work and influence celebrated collectively for the first time. Living in Ulster inspired them as thinkers, writers and individuals, and in particular the impact of the province's cultural interaction with Scotland worked deeply into their professional and personal lives."

Celebrating

The project celebrates their work through a major digitisation, outreach and development programme that highlights the Ulster-Scots poetic tradition and its impact upon Scottish, English and Irish literary traditions. It will provide access to a number of previously-unavailable resources; help to build academic and public/community interest in the topic; provide opportunities for universities, schools and the public to participate in Ulster-Scots literature, culture and heritage; and give opportunities for students to gain appreciation of and work experience in the sector.

Allan Ramsay

The project website, which will go live during Language Week, contains a treasure trove of materials. Firstly, there is a selection of Scots poet Allan Ramsay's first and second edition collections of poetry compiled by Belfast-based collector Andrew Gibson. This small, but world class collection of arguably the second most important Scottish poet of the 18th century, is one of the major collections of Ramsay's work. A considerable instigator of the revival of Scots vernacular poetry,



John and Roberta Hewitt

Ramsay was also responsible for publishing the work of one of the first important Ulster-Scots poets William Starrat.

Thomas Percy

Secondly Thomas Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry. The project reproduces the four different versions of this anthology which were produced through Percy's lifetime.

This is one of the most important collections of British ballads ever produced and proved the main text in its field well into the 19th century. It inspired the work of F.J. Childs in the USA and assisted in the exploration of ballad and song in Britain, Ireland and the USA. Percy spent many years in County Down

as Anglican Bishop of Dromore and supported a wide range of Ulster-Scots poets and writers and it is very exciting to be able to acknowledge his influence and impact on the work of Ulster-Scots traditions.

Samuel Ferguson

The third collector is Samuel Ferguson, and the collection of his works which are preserved at Ulster University have been digitised. Ferguson ranks as one of the most significant poets in Ireland in the 19th century and his Ulster-Scots background and interests can be traced through many of his works.

John Hewitt

The fourth John Hewitt, needs no

introduction to the world of Ulster-Scots writing. The project has digitised his poetry manuscripts and MA dissertation. These works are a storehouse of personal reflection, scholarship and information on Ulster language, literature and cultural heritage. As with Ferguson, Hewitt can be argued to be one of the most significant Ulster-Scots writers of his century.

Engagement

The provision of the digitised materials does not mark the finish of the project. The materials will provide a means to allow students and the public to engage with the writing in a number of ways. The website will provide a way in which individuals or groups can

transcribe some of the poetry for themselves to be placed online and offer their own poetry or prose pieces in response.

At present this is open to all students in the English subject at Ulster University and constitutes potentially the largest project team assembled by the University for a literary project. This will be rolled out shortly to the public to allow deeper engagement with the works on display and to assist in the continuation of the appreciation of the work of the collectors and Ulster-Scots traditions.

Those interested in getting a sneak preview of the materials should have a look at Hurchin Home @HurchinHome on Twitter.



Guests at the recent launch of the new Ulster-Scots Language Project; below, centre: Alex Stevenson and James Vernor; bottom: Fusefm Mourn Radio Presenter Joshua Morris

New Ulster-Scots language project for Kingdom of Mourne

The Schomberg Society, Kilkeel recently launched an ambitious new project, 'Ulster-Scots...An Everyday Language We All Use!'

Reivers House in Kilkeel was packed to capacity recently with a huge crowd of representatives from various groups, schools, organisations and statutory bodies from right across the community to celebrate the launch of the new project.

The project aims to capture and preserve Ulster-Scots words and phrases, poetry, song and traditions associated with the fishing and farming communities in the Mournes. As part of the project, the Schomberg Society will be working with many schools, community groups and individuals within the local community to help gather as much information as possible on the use of the Ulster-Scots language and traditions within these specific communities. As part of the project outreach, the Schomberg Society will be working closely with both the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ulster-Scots Community Network, who will be providing expert guidance and support.

A spokesperson from the Schomberg Society commented: "This project creates an excellent opportunity to help preserve for

future generations, the rich Ulster-Scots oral tradition amongst our fishing and farming communities in Mourne. We are very pleased to be working with many schools and groups from right across the community, who are all very keen to contribute to this exciting new project and learn more about the customs, traditions and folklore that have been associated with fishing and farming for many generations. The Society is very grateful for the support for this project provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and we look forward to working with them closely throughout the life of the project."

Jim McGreevy, Member of The National Lottery Heritage Fund NI Committee added: "We were delighted to support this local project which is going to explore the rich Ulster-Scots cultural heritage of the Mournes. The project will create an archive of material and resources that everyone can access and use. The project will also explore the strong maritime and agricultural heritage of the area. We wish the team well as they embark on their project and look forward to seeing what they uncover. It is thanks to



National Lottery players that we can support heritage projects that are important to local communities." Over the course of the next year, the Schomberg Society aims to compile all of the research gathered by volunteers from within the community to produce educational resources, including booklets, children's workbooks, an exhibition and oral recordings, all of which will also be widely distributed and also made available to access online. As part of the project and to coincide with Ulster-Scots Language Week, the Schomberg Society will be hosting an Ulster-Scots Language Discussion Night on Monday, November 25 2019 at 7.30pm in Reivers House, Kilkeel.

This event will create an opportunity to welcome everyone from within the community to come along and discuss, plan and map out the way forward for the Ulster-Scots Language in the Kingdom of Mourne. The Discussion Night will welcome a panel of local Ulster-Scots Language enthusiasts from Mourne who will discuss with the audience how to continue ensuring the Language is preserved and promoted for generations to come. A spokesperson from the Schomberg Society commented: "We are looking forward to our Ulster-Scots Language Discussion Night in Kilkeel, where we will be inviting representatives from various



Ulster-Scots groups, statutory bodies and agencies and also other folk who are passionate about the language to come along and help us put together a plan for helping promote and maintain the use of the Ulster-Scots tongue here in the Kingdom of Mourne." The Kingdom of Mourne is known as an Ulster-Scots Heartland, where the Ulster-Scots language is used on a day and daily basis by everyone within the local community. **The Schomberg Society would welcome all Ulster-Scots Language enthusiasts to attend and participate in the Discussion Night and for further information, please contact the Schomberg Society on 07753222553.**

Ten of the most damaging myths about the Ulster-Scots language

Most people in Northern Ireland respect cultural diversity and have respect for Ulster-Scots identity, heritage and language.

Sadly, a minority of people do not respect Ulster-Scots and can often be quite vocal about it.

The myths that they spread can be very damaging, because they cause people to be embarrassed or fearful about embracing, enjoying and sharing Ulster-Scots.

1. 'It doesn't exist'

It has often been claimed Ulster-Scots just doesn't exist. This simply isn't true. The language was established in Ulster in the early 1600s with the arrival of Lowland Scottish settlers and has been here ever since, featuring in printed prose and poetry for around 300 years. The earliest known Ulster-Scots poet was William Starrat of Strabane, first published in 1722. The last census in 2011 recorded that there were around 140,000 Ulster-Scots speakers in Northern Ireland.

2. 'It's sectarian'

Ulster-Scots was once infamously described as a "DIY language for Orangemen." The truth is our language is used right across the community in Northern Ireland and everyone has a wee bit of Ulster-Scots. The famous poet Seamus Heaney, who came from Bellaghy, wrote: "From the start, Burns' birl and rhythm, the tongue the Ulster-Scots brought with them and stick to still in County Antrim was in my ear. It westered in from east of Bann on the Derry air."

3. 'It's political'

It has been claimed that Ulster-Scots is political, in part because Ulster-Scots was recognised within the Belfast Agreement of 1998. An Irish News columnist even wrote: "Ulster Scots was invented by Britain during the Good Friday Agreement negotiations to give unionists wriggle room on Sinn Fein's promotion of Irish and to claim the Troubles represented a row between two cultures in which Britain was a non-partisan peacemaker" (11.08.12). This is complete nonsense. Ulster-Scots was well-known in Northern Ireland up until the 1960s. The onset of the Troubles pushed communities apart and led to a much greater focus on religious (Catholic/Protestant) and national (British/Irish) identity. Ulster-Scots didn't disappear during the Troubles, but recognition in the Belfast Agreement kick started a long overdue process of cultural restoration.

4. 'It's all about taking money away from Irish'

It is sometimes claimed that the Ulster-Scots movement only exists as a spoiler to take money away from the Irish language movement. That simply isn't true. The Ulster-Scots community, which receives



Ian Knox Cartoon, Irish News, 23.11.11



Ian Knox Cartoon, Irish News, 18.06.08

modest support from government, is entitled to have its rights respected and its needs met. Lobbying to achieve fair treatment is not an attack on anyone else's identity and certainly hasn't led to any reduction in government support for Irish.

5. 'It's a dialect, not a language'
People often claim that Ulster-Scots is a dialect, not a language. A dialect

is simply a regional variety of a language. Whether something is described as a language or dialect is much more to do with politics and power than it is with linguistics. Most of the critics don't really understand the terms and when they call Ulster-Scots a dialect they are really trying to run it down and say it is just 'bad English.' Ulster-Scots is actually

one of six main dialects (regional varieties) of the Scots language.

6. 'It's just bad English'
Ulster-Scots is often dismissed as bad English.

The close proximity of some Ulster-Scots words to English words, like coul/cold; houh/hold; toul/told; or boul/bold is often used to justify this, but it is wrong. Scots is

a sister language to English and many words have a shared origin. It is just like French and Spanish. For example, the French word for country is pays, which in Spanish is pais. No-one would claim Spanish is just bad French, even though 75 per cent of their words are very similar because of their shared roots in Latin.

7. 'It's closely related to Irish'
Some commentators wrongly claim Ulster-Scots is closely related to Irish. In fact, Ulster-Scots and Irish are members of two entirely separate language families. Irish is part of the Celtic language family with Scots Gaelic, Welsh, Cornish and Manx. Ulster-Scots is part of the Germanic language family with Scots, English, German, Dutch and Flemish. Like other languages that share a geographical space, words have been loaned/borrowed between Ulster-Scots and Irish, the most famous example being the word crack, which has become an iconic Irish word even though it is actually Ulster-Scots.

8. 'It's just talking with a Ballymena accent'

Talking a language isn't about how you sound, it is about using the words and speech patterns. Someone from Belfast sounds different to someone from Ballymena, Ballyhalbert, Londonderry or even East Donegal; but they could all be speaking Ulster-Scots. A Ballymena accent doesn't sound any different whether the person is speaking in English or Ulster-Scots. It is the words and how they are used that makes the difference.

9. 'It's how country people talk'

Many people, even within the Ulster-Scots community, think Ulster-Scots is only used in rural communities. This couldn't be further from the truth. A lot of Ulster-Scots is used in urban settings, but it is often dismissed as slang or bad English. Words like youse or yousens; windaes; and shap (shop) are all good Ulster-Scots words. Channel Four actually issued a guide to help people understand the speech on the hit tv series Derry Girls, and most of the words in it are Ulster-Scots!

10. 'It's how stupid people talk'
It has often been said or suggested that people who use Ulster-Scots are stupid.

A columnist in the Irish News once wrote that: "Ulster-Scots is just someone adopting the accent and limited vocabulary of an uneducated person from Co Antrim or north Co Down" (19.07.07). Ulster-Scots is virtually identical to Ayrshire Scots, the language of Robert Burns, recognised as one of the world's greatest poets. It has been used by generations of great writers, including C.S. Lewis, who was also a professor at Oxford University.

Ulster-Scots in my classroom

Jackie Morrison, retired Principal of Balnamore Primary School, Ballymoney

When I was growing up a young pig was a “toorie” and did not become a “piglet” until I went to school.

I couldn't understand the problem which teachers had with words or phrases which I used and the endless correction was tedious. However, like most people, I quickly learned that in order to progress in life there was no place in school for how I spoke at home.

The reality was that many teachers seemed to relish in humiliating those children who spoke “broad” and the fear of further derision was sufficient to quell anyone from relaxing and lapsing into “the vernacular”. Consequently, though I didn't realise it at the time, I developed the ability to communicate in different ways depending on my audience. But I continued to be intrigued by words used by my parents – for example on taking out the ashes to set the fire my father would have commented on the presence of “greeshoch” (glowing embers). I remember asking him where that word came from and being told “that's jist what we wur aye towl it wuz”. Words had obviously been inherited, handed down from generation to generation.

I progressed through the education system, ending up in Queen's University, where I was astounded to hear a lecturer mention “Ulster-Scots”. He highlighted on a map the areas where this might be spoken and stated that it was linked to the movement of people many years ago to Ireland from Scotland. Acknowledgement at last! I trained to be a teacher and my



Jackie Morrison

career eventually brought me to Balnamore Primary School. By this stage I'd resolved to do some writing in Ulster-Scots so that language might be memorialised in written form. However, “the best laid plans o mice an men gang aft agley”, for the job came with promotion and there was no time to write for pleasure. Soon it became obvious to me that

my aim needed to be safeguarding the existing remnants of spoken Ulster-Scots in the school. I use the word “remnants” because nothing appeared to have significantly changed in the delivery of education. Or had it? Through EMU funding (Education for Mutual Understanding) children across the province were taken on trips with

pupils from “other schools”. It was very seldom that any meaningful interactions occurred between the children unless sanctions were imposed by teachers. This was later developed into the New Curriculum which brought the opportunity I needed to introduce Ulster-Scots into the classroom through PDMU

(Personal Development and Mutual Understanding). Children could learn about their own history, culture, language and everything that this entailed.

My concern was that with the passing of each generation more of the language was being lost and I had a chance to do something about that. There were no books on the subject and I had to be resourceful. This sometimes involved inviting members of the local community to come into the school to talk about their experiences in life.

Bringing Ulster-Scots into the classroom was not an addition to the requirements of the curriculum but was a vehicle through which many subjects could be brought together. The children discussed poetry, rhyme and rhythm, onomatopoeia, assonance and phonics to name but a few. Literacy work led to opportunities for the children to perform publically at concerts, on radio and television. As a result, children developed positive self-esteem and were confident to talk about their culture and language. Currently schools have greater leverage in tailoring the curriculum content to suit the needs of their pupils. Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that one of the goals of education must be to encourage children to respect their own culture and that of others. I only wish that this had been in place at the outset of my career as I'd have spent less time justifying to educationalists why I was teaching Ulster-Scots and why they should be doing it too. On reflection, would I take on the system again to promote Ulster-Scots in the classroom? Absolutely, for naen o iz shud forget tha boul we wur bakit in.

Model Weans set for Leid Week

On Thursday, November 28, 2019 at 2pm, as part of Ulster-Scots Leid Week, Newtown Stewart Model Primary School will visit Newtown Stewart Library for a 'Celebration of Ulster-Scots Language' which will include music, poetry, song and dance.

The school has been actively engaged with the Ulster Scots Agency for many years and has shown an interest in the language in particular. On one occasion, Newtown Stewart Model hosted an Ulster-Scots poetry competition organised by Derry & Raphoe Action that attracted pupils from five primary schools in West Tyrone. This successful competition quickly became an annual event in the area and proved immensely popular with the school. Adopting a Burns theme, the pupils enthusiastically embraced the language of so many from that area.

Although several schools in West Tyrone have been engaged with the Agency, Newtown Stewart Model went a step further. Participating in the Agency's 'East – West Twinning Programme', the school was twinned with Minigaff Primary School in Newtown Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway. After a lengthy period of correspondence between both schools, some of the staff and pupils from Newtown Stewart Model went across to their Scottish counterparts for a two-day visit where they were able to develop their understanding of Scots and compare it to the Ulster-Scots spoken in West Tyrone. It is to their credit that they made the same trip a year later and that they maintain contact with Minigaff Primary today.

The pupils are looking forward to enjoying the Celebration of Ulster-Scots Language in their local library during Ulster-Scots Leid Week.



School children taking part in an Ulster-Scots language workshop

New Ulster-Scots society at

Group set up in response to demand from university students

The promotion of Ulster-Scots at our universities has taken a step forward with the establishment of a new Ulster-Scots Society at Queen's University in Belfast.

The new group has been set up in response to demand from students who want to see their cultural identity respected, valued and promoted within the university. Mollie Liggett, the group's Chair, who hails from Portadown and has long associations with Ulster-Scots and the marching band community, said: "There are a lot of students at Queen's who have an Ulster-Scots cultural identity and Ulster-Scots people have played a huge role in the life of the university since it was set up, so it seemed obvious we should set up a student society that could explore that heritage and give all of us an opportunity to enjoy our cultural traditions."

"We also want to help others to understand the cultural identity of the Ulster-Scots people, whether they come from Northern Ireland or further afield. There is a great Ulster-Scots diaspora around the world and students from many of those countries come to study at Queen's. We want to help them feel

at home here in Northern Ireland and exploring our shared heritage is a way to achieve that," she added. Welcoming the development, Ulster-Scots Agency Chief Executive Ian Crozier said: "It is hugely encouraging that so many students at QUB want to engage with their Ulster-Scots cultural identity and we look forward to helping them do that. We hope the new Society will also be embraced by the university, as it marks an important development in establishing greater cultural diversity in the life of Queen's."

The new Society is busy developing plans for the year ahead, which will start with activity in relation to Ulster-Scots Language Week, when they will support the launch of the new Ulster-Scots Collectors Project, which is set to take place at Queen's on November 25. The project has digitised a range of Ulster-Scots literary materials, including significant collections of Scots and Ulster-Scots material held in QUB. Queen's University was effectively founded as a university for Ulster Presbyterians, who led the institution for many years. Indeed, the Students' Union was founded by Thomas Sinclair, an Ulster-Scot and author of the Ulster Covenant.



Agency's place names guide for Belfast

Ulster-Scots Language Week will see the launch of a new pocket guide to Ulster-Scots place names in Belfast, which has been developed by the Ulster-Scots Agency with funding from Belfast City Council.

Ulster-Scots Agency Chief Executive, Ian Crozier, said: "200 years ago, Belfast was described as a town where the people spoke broad Scotch."

"That legacy lives on today, not only in the words and phrases that Belfast people use, but also in the names we have for places all over the city. There are more than 150 streets in Belfast that have Ulster-Scots in their name, as well as many that used to be known by an Ulster-Scots name, not to mention all sorts of geographical features."

"This publication is intended to help people understand the language and see that it is all around them every day."

"Ulster-Scots place names are not confined to any one area, they can be found throughout Belfast."

"It is easy to see the Ulster-Scots which is on the street name signs, what is harder is capturing the names which aren't on modern maps and maybe only live on in the memories of older people."

"During the course of developing the pocket guide, we picked up several new place names that we hadn't come across before, mostly in west Belfast."

"These included the Pound Burn, near Divis Street, the Mary Burn, near Milltown cemetery and the Clowney Water, a name given to part of the Forth River, which is itself also Ulster-Scots."

"We understand that this project is only the start. It will take a lot more work to develop a comprehensive record of all the Ulster-Scots place names in the city and find creative ways to mark them."

Belfast City Council Language Officer Michael Johnston said:

"The place names of Belfast are a really good way for us to understand the linguistic diversity of the city. There are numerous place names of English, Irish and Scottish origin and understanding these can help us to understand the people and events which have shaped the place where we live."

"Belfast City Council is delighted to have supported the development of the pocket guide to Ulster-Scots Place Names and we know it will make an important contribution to promoting respect for and between minority languages in the city."



Queen's



Queen's University, Belfast

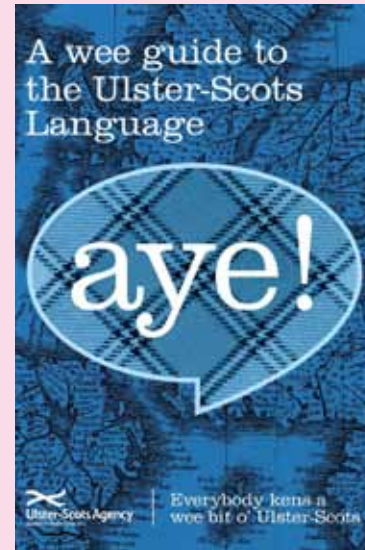
New 'wee' booklet is looking to introduce Ulster-Scots language to a wider audience

Knowledge and understanding of Ulster-Scots is set to receive a boost with the production of a new introductory booklet – **A Wee Guide to the Ulster-Scots Language** – which is being published by the Ulster-Scots Agency to coincide with the first ever Ulster-Scots Language Week.

Assuming no existing knowledge, the booklet introduces the Scots language, explains how it came to Ulster and places it in the context of the three main cultural identities here, English, Irish and Scots, which have combined to give Ulster a cultural landscape which is unique in the British Isles.

It also explains the literary legacy of Ulster-Scots from Robert Burns and the weaver poets to CS Lewis and Seamus Heaney; and explores the huge footprint of Ulster-Scots place names that can be found all over Ulster.

The guide also explains how Ulster-Scots is now enjoying a greater level of awareness and governmental support due to a community-led revival in the early 1990s, recognition in the Belfast Agreement of 1998 and



subsequent establishment of the Ulster-Scots Agency; and recognition by the UK government under the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages. This has given rise to a higher level of awareness within academia and greater interest from the media, which has also been supported by the establishment of the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund. The reader is then introduced to

written Ulster-Scots in the form of well-known words, frequently used phrases which could be heard anywhere in Ulster

Discussing the project, Ulster-Scots Agency Chief Executive Ian Crozier said:

"The Wee Guide will be very important going forward because its contents will underpin all of our language learning activities.

"It has been designed to provide an easy point of access for people to start thinking about Ulster-Scots, whether they are born and bred here, a new arrival or even a tourist.

"It will also support our new When o' Wurd's badge initiative, which will encourage people around the country to embrace the Ulster-Scots language.

"We want everyone here to be proud of Ulster-Scots and the contribution that it makes and can make to cultural diversity.

"But most importantly," Ian concluded, "we want everyone to know that no matter where we come from or what community we belong to, we all have a level of ability in Ulster-Scots that we should recognise, value and build on."



The bridge at Minnowburn, South Belfast

Small Steps to ensure place names are not lost

Residents in North Belfast are set to be consulted about how they would like to see Ulster-Scots place names recognised within their areas as part of Ulster-Scots Language Week.

Small Steps, which runs an Ulster-Scots Community Impact Project covering North and West Belfast, would like to see the area's rich collection of Ulster-Scots names marked in some way and are planning to go door-to-door to find out how local people feel about it. Ulster-Scots Project Officer Jennifer Crockard said: "There are loads of places in our area with an Ulster-Scots name, including estates like Brae Hill, Forthriver and Glencairn. "There are also lots of examples of streets that used to be known by an Ulster-Scots name, but that has

later been Anglicised or replaced altogether with something of English or Irish origin.

"For example, Gray's Loanen became Gray's Lane, while Buttle's Loanen became Clifton Street and the Point Loanen became Nelson Street.

"The name Buttermilk Looney was used for two different roads, which became Bilston Road and Skegoniel Avenue. We want to ensure these names, which are not marked anywhere, are not lost to future generations, and everyone will be able to recognise and appreciate the Ulster-Scots place names in our area."

Ulster-Scots Agency Language Officer Gary Blair commented: "It is really encouraging to see such an interest in Ulster-Scots place names



**Ulster-Scots Project Officer
Jennifer Crockard**

in an urban area like North Belfast. "Place names are an important way for people to relate to the Ulster-Scots language, to pick up a wee bit

of vocabulary and more importantly, to understand that Ulster-Scots has been part of the fabric of their community for hundreds of years.

We would love to see schools and communities all over the country getting into place names and we would be happy to help."

Belfast – The way of speaking is much more Scotch than Irish

By Nelson McCausland

Many people think of Ulster-Scots as a language that is spoken in some country areas of Ulster.

They do not think it has any relevance to Belfast but they are very wrong. Belfast was once an Ulster-Scots-speaking town and the way Belfast folk speak, even today, is still influenced by Ulster-Scots.

Most people in Belfast hear bits of Ulster-Scots spoken every day but they fail to recognise it. They are more likely to hear it and then dismiss it as bad English. During the 19th century Belfast expanded rapidly. In just 40 years, the population increased from 19,000 to 70,000 and this was largely the result of industrialisation. William Ritchie had come over to Belfast from Scotland in 1791 and established the first proper shipyard in Belfast Lough. There were also cotton mills, linen mills and other factories. Belfast was expanding and many of these people spoke Ulster-Scots, whether they be Scottish themselves or moving into Belfast for work from rural areas of Antrim and Down, bringing the Ulster-Scots language they had spoken since childhood. When the French traveller, Le

Chevalier de la Tocnaye toured Ireland at the end of the 18th century, he visited Belfast. An account of his travels were published in 1797, where he said: "Belfast has almost entirely the look of a Scotch town and the character of the inhabitants has considerable resemblance to that of the people of Glasgow. The way of speaking is much more Scotch than Irish."

The Ordnance Survey Memoirs in the 1830's recorded Scots in many areas surrounding Belfast as well: "Their dialect, accent, idioms and customs are strictly Scottish." (Mallusk). "In their habits and character, the people, that is the natives of the parish are essentially Scottish.... Their idioms and saws are strictly Scottish and many of them are pithy and quaint." (Canmoney) "The inhabitants of this part of Ireland are half Scotch in their language and manners." (Knockbreda) "The language in use here is... strangely tinged with the Scottish idiom and accent" (Holywood) "The general character of the people is strictly Scottish... their idioms and old saws saviour strongly on the country of their ancestors."

(Ballyclare) "The Scottish idiom is mostly observable in the baronies of Ards and Castlereagh, although extending as far as Hillsborough and Dromore. Until recently it was spoken as broadly as in Ayr or Wigtownshire." (County Down).

Ulster-Scots was freely spoken throughout Belfast and it was the principal language of Belfast for more than 200 hundred years, but the use of Ulster-Scots was gradually eroded during the 19th and 20th centuries. This was partly due to families that moved into Belfast losing connection with kith and kin in the country over the generations. The erosion was quite rapid in the latter half of the 20th century, largely due to the influence of schools and the media. For many generations school teachers discouraged the use of Ulster-Scots, it being corrected and sometimes punished. That official discouragement had a major impact. At one time the media in Ulster reinforced awareness of Scots with children, through publications such as 'Oor Wullie' and 'The Broons.' In the 1950s and 1960s many TV programmes were Scottish. Those are largely a thing of the past and instead we have an overwhelming influence of Anglo-American television culture. Nowadays, young people are more likely to know the latest slang words rather than

traditional Ulster-Scots. Despite these negative forces, the Ulster-Scots language can still be found in Belfast and there is hope for the future. The Belfast Agreement of 1998 emphasised the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to languages and recognised Ulster-Scots as 'part of the cultural wealth of the island of Ireland.' Ulster-Scots is recognised and protected under the European Charter for Minority Languages, in common with Scots. The Ulster-Scots Agency promotes the language, heritage and culture of Ulster-Scots people and also supports the voluntary and community sector to promote the language. It also works with other organisations such as Northern Ireland Screen to promote Ulster-Scots and increase the exposure of Ulster-Scots on both TV and radio with many great quality programmes in production screened into thousands of homes across Ulster. The Agency runs educational programmes all year round and initiatives such as Ulster-Scots Language Week will further raise awareness and ensure that our language has a bright future.

Nelson McCausland is the author of Scotch Town: Ulster-Scots Language and Literature in Belfast, which is available from the Ulster-Scots Agency.

Film to spread the word

The Ulster-Scots Community Network has been involved in representing the Ulster-Scots community in the delivery of a new Communications and New Communities project. During the filming of a new video, which is expected to be launched early in 2020, the Network provided the chance for various aspects of Ulster-Scots cultural expression in Belfast to be filmed. Ulster-Scots Education and Outreach Officer Matthew Warwick provided information, guidance and pointers as to how the film-makers could best engage with the Ulster-Scots community, and the crew visited the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre several times to film events, as well as talking with native speakers about how important the language is to them. Matthew also spoke about the fact the Ulster-Scots language is present in the day-to-day speech of everyone in Belfast, although often they may not know it. Explaining how Ulster-Scots words and phrases have been passed down through the generations is just one way this film can show the Ulster-Scots leid is as much a part of the cultural fabric of Belfast as any other language. **David Gilliland is Operations Director for the Ulster-Scots Community Network.**



Putting the Ulster-Scots language into a European framework

In May 2016, the Pôle Irlande research group hosted an international conference at the Sorbonne Nouvelle entitled: “Tipping the scales: Reversing decline in indigenous minority cultures in Europe.”

The theme of the conference had emerged out of my own research on cultural traditions in Northern Ireland and in particular on Ulster-Scots. As everyone knows, Ulster-Scots has been the object of sustained denigration over the years. The result has been an at times high-profile campaign in the media to ridicule any manifestation of the culture. This has been successful in limiting academic interest in the phenomenon and in alienating individuals within especially the Protestant middle-class, who might otherwise have been more sympathetic to Ulster-Scots. It seemed important to address these issues.

In many ways, interest in Ulster-Scots culture is merely a reflection of my personal history. With family roots in Ulster-Scots areas of counties Antrim and Londonderry, and with extended family in the Lowlands of Scotland, the Scottish dimension was always present, in the everyday speech, in the mindset and in the logic of family connections. Interest in the Scottish influence in Ulster was quite natural and there seemed to be no good reason why people should not be interested in exploring its place in the mosaic of cultures that has been a characteristic of the region since the 17th century.

Furthermore, there seemed nothing particularly sinister or reprehensible about something that was increasingly a common feature of life all over Europe. Indeed, having lived in France for nearly 40 years, when I went to visit my in-laws round Toulouse, or when I went on holiday near Alicante, the regional languages and cultures I was in contact with – Occitan and Valencian – clearly had much less explosive relationships with the surrounding ‘dominant’ languages or with their regional alter egos than was the case for Ulster-Scots. Although sporadically there might be tension over this or that issue, there was nothing to compare with the vicious trench warfare that characterised the debate in Northern Ireland. Clearly, there was a need for a more dispassionate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the tradition. It seemed this could best be done by stepping outside the immediate – sometimes toxic – context in Ulster. It struck me that if anyone were looking for a parallel with the situation of minority languages in this part of the world, a good place to start would be Brittany. In each case there was the presence of a



Members of the core group on the steps of the Grand Amphi, Sorbonne Nouvelle

“Ulster-Scots has been the object of sustained denigration over the years. The result has been a high-profile campaign in the media to ridicule the culture.” – Wesley Hutchinson



world language – English or French – spoken by the overwhelming majority, and a Celtic language – Irish or Breton – spoken by a relatively small proportion of the population in the region. Most importantly, there was also a third player which, in both cases, was particularly close to the dominant language: Ulster-Scots in the northern counties of Ireland and Gallo in the eastern parts of Brittany. It was the proximity of Ulster-Scots to English and of Gallo to French that was clearly the key factor. Much work had been done on the relationship between French and Breton and between English and Ulster Irish. However, whenever analysis was extended to look at the triangular relationship that existed in the two areas, Ulster-Scots and Gallo appeared systematically as the weakest links. Whether in terms of lexical range and grammatical characteristics or in terms of the wealth of the literatures that each language culture had produced, there seemed to be no common measure between the situation of Irish and Breton on the one hand and that of Ulster-Scots and Gallo on the other. Indeed, when any

such comparisons were made, the obvious asymmetry made the latter appear all the poorer. The vergonha (sense of shame, cultural cringe) that Lafont saw as one of the characteristic features of any minority language community seemed even deeper the closer it was to the dominant language. It appeared all the more important to look at things within a different frame and in an environment that would be sensitive to the issues faced by these particular language communities. Indeed, it is clear that - for whatever reasons - there is a hierarchy among minority languages and that the ones that interested us found themselves at the very bottom of the pile. In many ways, therefore, it was the specificities of the positions of Ulster-Scots and Gallo that were to form the nucleus of the first conference. However, it was decided that rather than limiting the exchanges to an Ireland-France, or – rather - to an Ulster-Brittany frame, more might be gained by opening things up on to a broader canvas. It was at this point that contact was made with the University of Poitiers where work was going

on into different aspects of Scots, Poitevin-Saintongeais and Occitan, the University of Strasbourg, in relation to Alsatian, and the University of Katowice, in relation to Silesian. These contributions allowed us to place the debate in the north of Ireland within a broader, comparative perspective and to identify the similarities and differences in the preoccupations and strategies of those who are defending the interests of these minority cultures on the ground. One of the primary objectives behind the first conference was to ensure that the debate that we were trying to generate should include people from outside the university. Academic work on linguistics, literature and cultural studies would clearly benefit from exposure to people promoting the languages on the ground - not only activists, but also those working in public bodies such as the Conseil régional de Bretagne or the Ulster-Scots Agency, whose function was to cater for the minority language communities concerned. The conference was a great success, highlighting not only how many features these language



Professor Wesley Hutchinson

cultures had in common, but also the areas where their circumstances differed, sometimes radically. It quickly emerged that there was great potential for further exploration in a number of fields - the place of these minority languages in the education system, issues of visibility in public places, constitution of digital archives, media involvement, language planning, etc. – and that it would be a pity not to follow up these discussions within the comparative frame that had been put in place.

The core group formed by those who attended that opening conference at the Sorbonne Nouvelle has therefore gone on to hold a number of events and group discussions. So far, we have organised a total of four international conferences. Frank Ferguson (Ulster University) in collaboration with the Ulster-Scots Agency, organised a second conference in Belfast, entitled “The Next Step” (November 2016). This was followed by a third conference in Katowice, organised by Leszek Drog, “Minor Cultures in Dialogue” (May 2017), and a fourth in Poitiers, “Promoting or demoting: the transmission of minority languages from past to present,” organised by Stéphanie Noirard and Jean-Christophe Dourdet (April 2018). As I write, a publication of papers presented at Poitiers is in its final stages of preparation. A fifth conference, organised by Pascale Etchart - “Minority Languages: what actors for what future?” - will take place at the Université of Strasbourg in November 2019.

It is hoped that the collaboration that has been made possible within this network will continue in the coming years, giving the languages concerned a broader perspective from which to assess their particular positions.

By Wesley Hutchinson, Emeritus Professor of Irish Studies (Sorbonne Nouvelle), author of the recently published, *Tracing the Ulster-Scots Imagination* (Ulster University, 2018).

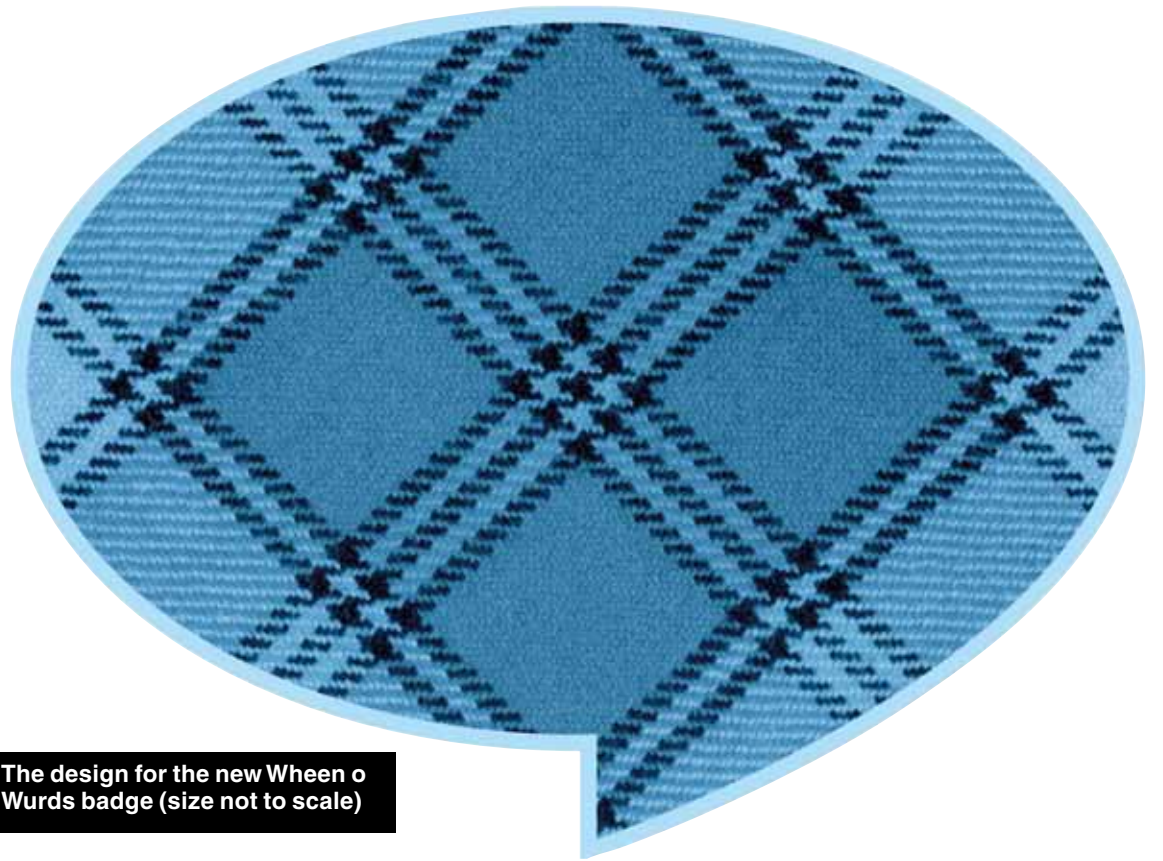
Don't miss new Wheen o Wurds badge

As part of the first ever Ulster-Scots Leid Week/Ulster-Scots Language Week, the Ulster-Scots Agency is launching a new badge, called the Wheen o Wurds badge, which people can wear to show that they have some Ulster-Scots.

Ian Crozier (right), Chief Executive at the Ulster-Scots Agency commented: "A big part of Ulster-Scots Language Week is to get the message out that most people here, no matter where they are from or what community they belong to, have a wee bit of Ulster-Scots, sometimes without



even realising it. We want people to recognise how much Ulster-Scots they already know and to wear the wee Wheen o Wurds badge as a symbol of pride, both in their own ability and also in Ulster-Scots, an important part of our shared heritage. "The Wheen o Wurds badge is a blue tartan speech bubble, designed to be worn on your lapel, classy and discreet so that it can be worn in all sorts of settings, whether at work, school or just when you're out and about. We've had 2500 made for Language Week, but as there are more than 140,000 Ulster-Scots speakers in Northern Ireland, we



The design for the new Wheen o Wurds badge (size not to scale)

reckon that will just be the tip of the iceberg," he added. The new Ulster-Scots badge is based on a similar idea used by the Irish language community, except the Ulster-Scots version is

more rigorous, because people actually have to demonstrate that they understand the words. They can complete a short online test on the Ulster-Scots Agency website or else attend an Ulster-Scots

language workshop delivered by the Ulster-Scots Agency or Ulster-Scots Community Network and just have to show they know at least 20 Ulster-Scots words out of a list of 30 – straightforward enough!

Former Scots Language Centre director to host event

In another development that shows how the Ulster-Scots and Scots language communities are working more closely together, former Scots Language Centre director Michael Hance will be in Belfast to give a talk as part of Ulster-Scots Language Week.

Michael stepped down as Director of the SLC at the end of last year, after 16 years at the helm, but he is still with the Centre, working on strategic projects, including raising awareness in the run up to the next Census in 2021.

Welcoming the development, Agency CEO Ian Crozier said: "Michael Hance has undertaken a huge amount of work to raise the profile of Scots in Scotland over the course of two decades. "We are delighted he has agreed to



come across the sheugh to talk to us about the progress of the Scots Language Centre and the Scots language more generally; and give us the latest news on the projects that the SLC is currently running. "His talk will be of great interest to anyone who is keen to see an increased profile for Ulster-Scots."

The SLC undertakes a wide range of projects to promote the Scots language, which has recently been expanded with the launch of an excellent virtual resource around Scots language place names. It can be accessed via

www.scotslanguage.com The event will take place in the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast on November 27 and include refreshments and the opportunity for questions and discussion.

A Wheen o Ulster-Scots Wurds

Everybody here knows a wee bit of Ulster-Scots, see how many of these 30 words you know:

Aye: yes/always Blether: idle chat Boak: vomit Crabbit: grumpy Crack: banter/news Drooth: thirst/drunard Eejit: idiot Flit: move Footery: awkward Forbye: as well Foundered: exhausted (with cold) Gulder: shout

Hallion: rascal Hoke: dig Jeuk: avoid Mingin: dirty Neb: nose Oxter: armpit Poke: ice cream cone Quare: considerable Redd up: tidy up Scunnered: disgusted/embarrassed Skelf: splinter Slabber: loudmouth/saliva Sleekit: sly Teemin: pouring Thran: stubborn Wean: child Wee: little Wheest: be quiet

Discussion plan for schools qualification in Ulster-Scots

As part of Ulster-Scots Language Week, the Ulster-Scots Agency will be hosting a workshop for educationalists to learn about the Scots Language Award, a qualification which is delivered by the Scottish Qualifications Authority and consider whether and how it might be adapted for use by schools in Ulster to study Ulster-Scots.

Ulster-Scots Agency Language Officer Gary Blair commented: "At this event we want to put educators from Ulster, whether they are teachers, people from CCEA, the Education Authority or Department of Education, into a room with their equivalents from Scotland to help them understand how the Scots language is being delivered in schools across Scotland and the difference that it is making in the lives of weans, so that we can start a conversation about how Ulster-Scots weans can get access to a qualification in their native tongue."

A range of speakers will be attending from Scotland, including Marilyn Waters, the Qualifications Manager for Languages at the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), who is responsible for the development and maintenance of the Scots Language Awards, launched in Scotland in 2014. Ms Waters told The Ulster-Scot: "The Scots Language Award enables students to study the history and development of



Marilyn Waters - Qualifications Manager for Languages at the Scottish Qualifications Authority

Scots and develop their ability to communicate in the language. It also helps them to use the language creatively, and to think about how language works within a wider context. "An important factor in the success of the awards is that whether or not students see themselves as 'native' speakers, the awards also enable them

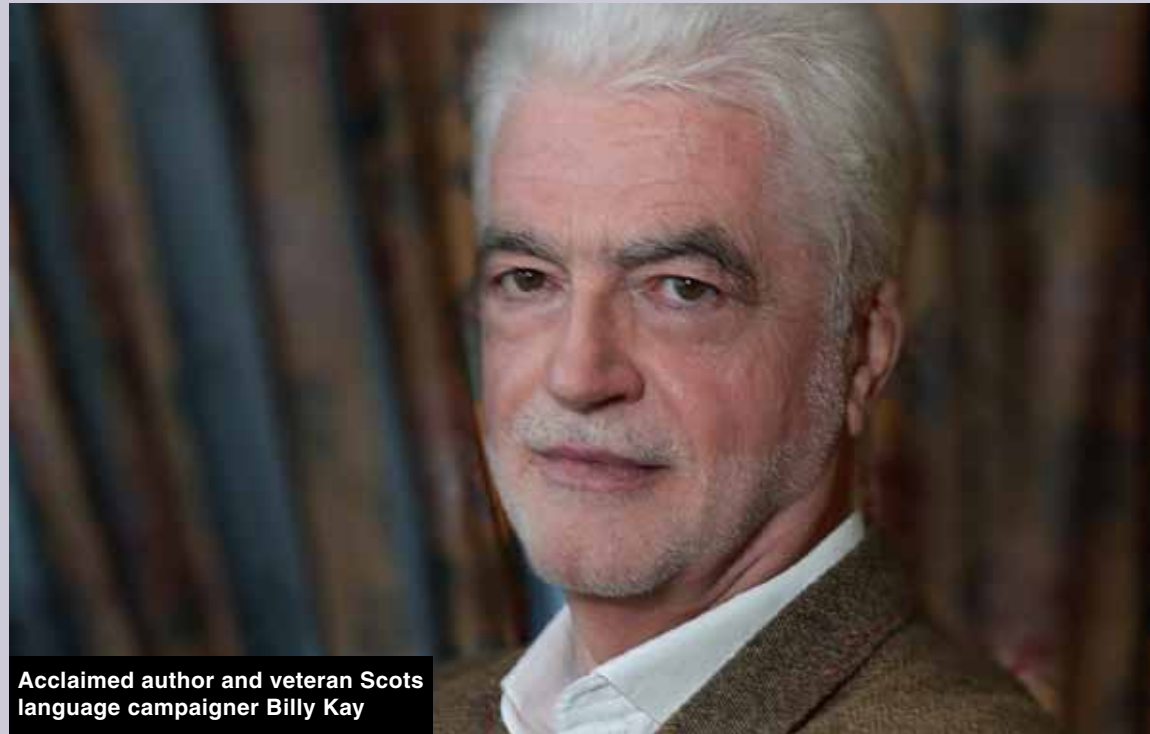
to gain a deeper insight into Scotland's history, people, and cultural heritage." The session is taking place at the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast on Tuesday, November 26. If you would like to book a place, please contact Gary Blair on 02890 231113 or e-mail gblair@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk.

Date with Scots language pioneer

Acclaimed author Billy Kay to give lecture as part of Leid Week

One of the most important lectures of Ulster-Scots Leid Week will be delivered by the acclaimed author and veteran Scots language campaigner Billy Kay. His book, 'Scots: Tha Mither Tongue', was a watershed in popular awareness of the Scots language and he has spent a lifetime writing and broadcasting in relation to the language and culture of Scotland. He also authored a second seminal work on the Scots diaspora, *The Scottish World*. In his writing on the various dialects of Scots, Billy Kay pays particular attention to Ulster-Scots, for which he has a real admiration, reflecting the doggedness of the people and the purer form of Scots we have maintained.

He quotes Rev John Graham of Maghera, writing in the early 19th century: "In reporting the language and customs peculiar to this neighbourhood, attention must be paid to the usual division of the inhabitants into English, Irish and Scotch. The dialect and customs of these distinct races are as different from each other as their respective creeds. The Dissenters speak broad Scotch and are in the habit of using terms and expressions long since obsolete, even in Scotland."



Acclaimed author and veteran Scots language campaigner Billy Kay

He observes that: "Since the days of the United Irishmen, the pressures against Ulster-Scots have been similar to those against Scots in Scotland, with the dialects there classified as 'provincial and barbaric'" and reflects on the professional classes adopting

Standard English and seeking to create a division between themselves and ordinary people. Notwithstanding this, he is happy to report of Ulster-Scots: "Given the speed with which Scottish colonists have divested themselves of their native tongues elsewhere

in the world in more recent times, the most remarkable feature of the Ulster communities is their retention of Scots in their everyday speech. Many of these areas have not had a fresh influx of Scots settlers for more than 300 years and have been exposed to the

anglicising 'improvers' as much as any place in Scotland, yet their Scots is thrang with words you rarely come across in Scotland." Looking forward to Kay's lecture, which will take place at the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre on the evening of November 27, Ulster-Scots Agency Chief Executive Ian Crozier said: "Billy Kay has had a long-term interest in Ulster-Scots and that interest has been a source of inspiration to many of us, expressed as it was at a time when few others shared it. "We will be delighted to welcome him to the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre to listen to his reflections on the growth and development of the Scots language in recent times and his journey as a campaigner for cultural change, which will undoubtedly have parallels with our own experience and hopefully provide the opportunity for learning that can be applied in the next stage of the campaign to promote and develop Ulster-Scots."

For further information about the event, contact the Ulster-Scots Agency on 02890 231113, the Ulster-Scots Community Network on 02890 436710, visit www.ulsterscotsagency.org.uk or check out the Ulster-Scotch Leid Week postings on our Facebook page.

Gibson: 'An Inconvenient Truth'

Tha ither nicht A wus watchin tha box, whun A cum across a picture caa'd 'An Inconvenient Truth.'

It wus scriverit bae tha former Vice President o' tha United States o' Amerika, Al Gore, til lairn fowk about global wairmin. Heth it wus yin o' tha maist successful pictures o' twa thoosan an seiven, takkin twa Academy awards, an tae this day is uisit til lairn weans aa owre tha world. Stillanaw mair nor half tha fowk in Amerika disnae believe in global wairmin - A doubt thaurs aye fowk ye jist cannae lairn. Aiblins it's tae much boather, or mebbe jist plain thranness, but thaur's aye yins A'll no appen thaur mind tae tha truth, even an undeniable yin. Weel A'll tell ye noo, A can sympathise wi Mr. Gore fer wir ain leid haes becum anither yin o' thon inconvenient truths. Tha Ulster-Scots fowk, along wi thur cultur an leid forbye, haes baen aroon fur mair nor fower hunner year. Yet accordin tae a brave ween o weel lairnit fowk, tha Ulster-Scotch leid is a 'recent invention'.

Hoo tha hae managed tae ignore tha screeds o' evidence tae tha contrary is owre ma heid.



Darren Gibson

A'm dumfoothered as tae hoo the hae niver cum across tha poems o' tha weaver poets, fun in aa tha Ulster papers fae tha late seiventeen hunners oan, or tha weel-kent scriverens o' W. G. Lyttle in tha eichteen hunners, wha hae aa baen

repentit in tha last when o' yeirs. Even rinnin yer een owre tha internet wid tell ye about tha hairsome buiks o Archibald McIlroy fae Ballyclare, wha scriverit 'When Lint was in the Bell' (1897) an 'The Auld Meetin Hoose Green' (1898).

An if aa thon disnae convince ye, surely ye cannae deny tha weel-kent wurks o Rabbie Burns? Fur efter aa, oor ain hamely tongue is nithin mair nor lallan Scotch distilled oan Ulster soil. Aa o iz shud mind, it maks no odds if its Lallans or Ulster, thaur

baith ouler than tha English whas taakit tha day. In his forethocht til The New Testament in Braid Scots, Reverend Wye Smith scriverit, "Lat nae man think it is a vulgar tongue - a mere gibberish to be dune wi' as sune as ane is bye the schule-time. It is an ancient and honourable tongue; wi' rutes deep i' the yird; aulder than muckle o' the English. It cam doon till us throwe oor Gothic and Pictish forebears; it was heard on the battle-field wi' Bruce; it waftit the triumphant prayers and sangs o' the Martyrs intil Heeven; it dir'l't on the tongue o' John Knox, dencouncin wrang." Thon's pooerfu wurds. Bit dinnae tak it fae me, nor even tha guid Reverend. Luk fur yersel, wi ye ain een, at the clatter o rhymes, tha muckle mountain o' buiks an tha wabsteids fu o oul scriverins. Aye maun, wir leids oniethin but racent. Weel ma freens, gien ye hae read this far, aiblins thaurs hope fur iz yet. Tae next time, lang may yer lum reek an yer spicket dribble.

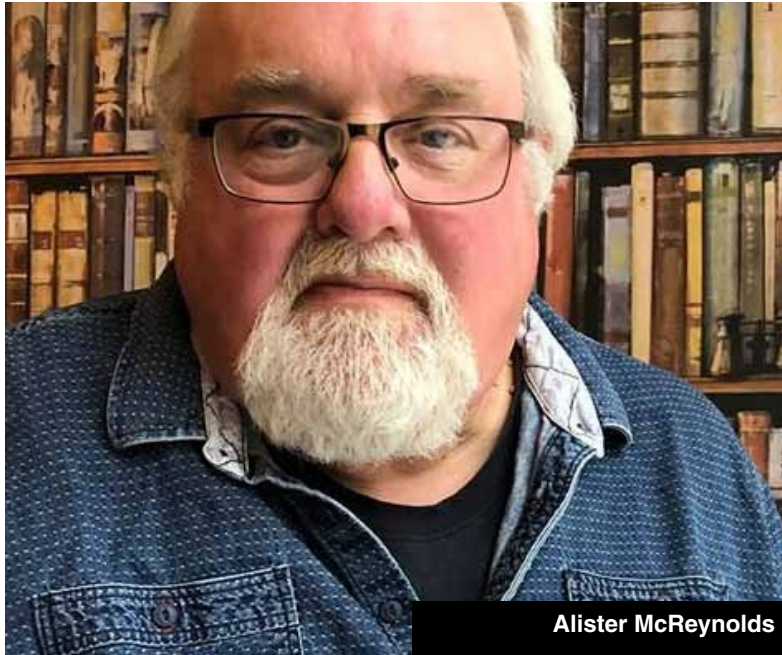
Darren Gibson is an Ulster-Scotch scriver, born an raised doon tha Airds, in tha toonlan o Ballyfrenis, nearhaun Millisle.

The story of Robert Dinsmoor: the rustic poet of New Hampshire

Robert Dinsmoor was born in 1757, just two years before that other poet called Robert - Burns of Alloway in Ayrshire.

Dinsmoor's grandfather, John Dinsmoor, emigrated from Ballywattick near Ballymoney around 1723, not long after the 1718 exodus of the Rev. James McGregor who led five ships of Presbyterians from the Bann Valley to New England. Shortly after he arrived in Maine, John Dinsmoor was taken prisoner by Native American tribesmen, but to his credit, he formed a good relationship, indeed friendship, with the tribal chief, coincidentally also called John, and the latter eventually allowed Dinsmoor to escape his detention and make his way to the Scotch-Irish settlement of Londonderry, New Hampshire. Many of the town's inhabitants were 'Five Ships' survivors and knew John well and the proprietors were happy to grant him 100 acres of land in the environs of the settlement.

'Daddy Dinsmoor', as he was known, was a stonemason to trade and not surprisingly, he built himself a strong house and sent word back to Ballymoney for his wife and children to come and join him. His son William was born in 1731 and



Alister McReynolds

he was the father of Robert our poet. When Robert was still a young lad, he wrote a little poem dedicated to his pet dog 'Skip'. It was written before the works of Burns were published, but expressed that same sense of the sacrosanct equality that Burns would later express as being

possessed by all of God's creatures. The poem was written in Ulster-Scots in the poetic style that Burns would make famous. Remarkable really to remember that it was composed on the American frontier two generations after the family left Ulster:

'Though like a lord man o'er ye rules,
An' bang ye round wi' chairs an' stools,
An' bruise ye wi' the auld pot buils,
Mind not their powers--
Their bodies maun gang to the mools,
As weel as ours.'

The wee poem also contains a picture of life for the Scotch-Irish settlers:
'He try'd to keep the corn frae bears,
An' help'd us ay to sing our prayers'.
At the age of 20, Robert married Molly, his childhood sweetheart and in the years that followed, as well as serving in the military and a spell as a schoolmaster, he remained a farmer and a stout defender of the orthodox Presbyterianism of his forefathers.

A favourite poem by Dinsmoor was written in October 1820, a hundred years or so after his grandfather left Ballymoney; and yet it was written in a style that at once paid homage to Robert Burns and was also the language of his Scottish and Ulster antecedents. The poem was written as a letter of thanks for the hospitality extended to Dinsmoor by a friend that he visited in the Scotch-

Irish settlement of Belfast, Maine.
'Fare fa'ye Joe, my canty Ladd,
Nae feckless whim can mak' thee sad;
Whan gear comes linkin' in ye're glad,
An' blithe ye feel;
Mair frien's like you I wish I had,
Wi' hearts as leal!
Ilk dollar that ye sen' awa',
May it return ere night wi' twa,
And peace an' plenty, bless your ha',
An' a' concerns;
An' nae misfortune e'er befa'
Your wife an' bairns.

Surely any one of us would be glad to be the subject of such a toast? Frank Ferguson and I produced the first edition of our edited, Robert Dinsmoor's Scotch-Irish Poems, a few years back and happily it has now sold out. We are now working on a second edition which we hope to publish shortly. A new Afterword has been written and additions made and we hope that it will prove to be just as popular this time around given the strong links that have been built between Ulster and Maine since 2018.

Alister McReynolds is an author and historian specialising in Ulster-Scots and New England

Calling all Ulster-Scots writers

One of the highlights of Ulster-Scotch Leid Week will be a Masterclass for Ulster-Scots writers led by the acclaimed Scots poet Stuart Paterson.

The event, which will take place in the Discover Ulster-Scots Centre in Belfast's Cathedral Quarter on November 30, will include a session for aspiring writers who can write in Ulster-Scots but have never had a go at poetry; and a session for experienced Ulster-Scots writers/poets who want to take their work to the next level.

Ahead of his forthcoming visit, Stuart has shared some of his philosophy with The Ulster-Scot: "I'm looking forward immensely to visiting Belfast, on St. Andrew's Day of all days! And what a marvellous reason to visit – blethering about, reading and engaging a wheen of folk in Scots, my native language. A language with a written tradition going back over 700 years: a language which 1.4 million Scots identified as being speakers of in the 2011 census and a language which, as I write, is undergoing a huge national resurgence at grassroots and government levels. What better time to visit Northern Ireland and shine a bright an' couthie licht on wir shared leid?"



Masterclass with Scots poet Stuart Paterson

"I was brought up and educated as a young working-class guy just over the water from Northern Ireland, in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire. I consider Scots to be my first language. It's the language we spoke in the house, in the playground, with family and pals, at work and in the howffs. It's

not 'a dialect of English' or slang. It's a language, my language, our language. I work hard to promote its use, not just in the arts but in everyday life, which I believe was one of the reasons I became BBC Scotland Poet in Residence in 2017. And I love working with young folk

and adults to let them know that their Scots is valid, treasured & a part of who they are. I'm not just involved in Scots language – it's an essential part of who I am.

"I live in Galloway and visit schools through the Scottish Book Trust's Live Literature scheme, much of this work focused on getting young people to write and express themselves in their own Scots. I also collaborate with other artists in music, painting, theatre and recently glasswork. Poetry, to me, should be accessible without being dumbed down, relevant without having to be jokey, for people and not AT people. Scots very much involves the poetry and music of people and place. It's a real and fantoosh privilege to be part of that.

"I work full-time as a poet and writer and have heavily promoted Scots across the UK and abroad through my work in TV, online, in print and in the classroom. My first collection entirely in Scots, 'Aye', twice sold out in 2016. As did 'Heelster Gowdie/ Beul-fo-bhonn', a collection I wrote with Gaelic poet Marcas Mac an Tuarneir. The CD of my works by noted Scots language archivists 'Scotsoun' is currently on sale. I was delighted that renowned Scottish publisher Chapman recently

received a Scottish Government grant to produce 'Wheen', my new and selected poems in Scots in 2020. And Tippermuir Books from Perth will be publishing a big, illustrated collection of my poems for weans, 'A Squatter o Bairnrhymes,' also in 2020. Virrsome days aheid! "I'm very excited to have started work as a Scottish Qualifications Authority External Verifier in schools throughout Scotland, on the SQA Scots Language Award which raises the standing & profile of Scots as a subject of increasing academic recognition. I sit on the Board of the Scottish Poetry Library, promoting not only Scots language but Scottish poetry itself as widely as possible. I've lots of upcoming work with shuilweans and teachers in Scots through the Scottish Book Trust and have started developing a play about the amazing Isobel 'Tibbie' Pagan of Robert Burns's 'Ca' The Yowes' fame. "And I'll continue to advocate wherever and whenever possible for Scots as a language. A language of the everyday and the everywhere, not just for one day a year in January. Haud furril!"

For more information about the Masterclass, contact the Ulster-Scots Community Network on 02890 436710.

Ali to host Ulster-Scots TV show

The Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund is set to fund a two-part television series focused on young Ulster-Scots presented by Scots language social media sensation Alistair Heather.

This series, entitled *Blether*, aims to stimulate a renaissance in Northern Ireland amongst Ulster-Scots speakers. The plan is to take several creative young people from traditional Ulster-Scots communities and introduce them and their culture to presenter Heather, who will invite them to participate in a series of Scots language challenges, taking those willing to accept with him to Scotland.

Hot-housed in an environment where Scots is flourishing in an urban, 21st century context, we will find out if the experience can inspire the young people to think differently about how they use Ulster-Scots back home.

The programmes will focus on the future of Ulster-Scots, but also seek to understand the present. Alistair will explore the contemporary story through the contributors' experiences, as well as in lively discussions with some of the academics and activists fighting to keep the language alive in 21st century Northern Ireland. This project will add to the content already produced but also reenergise the sector by engaging with young, vibrant and creative



Ali Heather

people in Northern Ireland. It will be made clear that the future of Ulster-Scots is thriving here and also open a debate on how other indigenous languages are growing around the world.

Commenting on the development, Ulster-Scots Agency Chief Executive Ian Crozier said: "We are very excited about the potential of this project to bring Ulster-Scots to a much younger audience, who will be essential for the future of our language.

"It is great to have Ali Heather on board, he is a real force of nature for the promotion of Scots and we have enjoyed some really interesting chats about the Scots language that we share and how Ulster and Scotland can work together to take it forward. It is a great opportunity and we look forward to helping to make the most of it."

Alistair Heather is from the village of Newbigging in Angus. A writer, historian and columnist, he writes in both Scots and English for the

Herald, The National and The Scotsman. In the last year his Facebook films – presented in Scots - for BBC Scotland's 'The Social' have helped build him a huge social media presence, with combined views of around six million. Alistair works at the University of Aberdeen promoting the language in the North-East at both grassroots and official levels and runs evening classes for native speakers and migrants to improve their fluency in the 'Mither Tongue.' A passionately

engaged native speaker, Alistair's enthusiasm for Scots is infectious. For him, this language remains central to his identity, his daily life – and his future.

Blether will be made by local company Erica Starling Productions and directed by Gillian Callan, whose previous Ulster-Scots projects include The Village, The Call of the Pipes and An Independent People. Executive Producer will be BAFTA-winning film-maker Alison Millar.

Ards Choir sings the Messiah

This Christmas will be unique for a group of singers from the Ards Peninsula, as their community choir prepares to be broadcast across Northern Ireland singing Handel's *Messiah* in Ulster-Scots as part of a television production for the BBC, which has been supported by the Ulster-Scots Broadcast Fund and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

The programme follows the choir, drawn from residents of the Ards, from their formation, through months of rehearsals as they work with Choir Director Neil Martin and a top class musical ensemble to prepare and perform excerpts from *The Messiah* which have been translated into Ulster-Scots by Dr Philip Robinson of the Ulster-Scots Language Society. Their journey culminates in a live performance in front of an audience at the Portico in Portaferry.

The project was inspired by a language project involving the local community of Aberdeenshire, which staged the *Messiah* in the local Scots dialect of Doric: this documentary series will follow the similar communal experience of local people planning and staging a performance in Ulster-Scots in the landscape of the Ards peninsula. Commenting on the initiative, Ulster-



The Messiah Choir rehearses in Portavogie Primary School

Scots Agency Chief Executive, Ian Crozier, said: "This is a really special project which gives a local community the opportunity to engage with their own language, Ulster-Scots, in a unique way, allowing them to combine their love of singing with the language that they have grown up with. "We are delighted that the translation work has been

undertaken by the same people who translated the four gospels into Ulster-Scots, which means that the linguistic element will be top notch and we have no doubt that the singing will be top notch as well."

The *Messiah* is one of the most famous and popular pieces of classical music in the world – one instilled with a deep and passionate

expression of the Christian faith. With its solo arias, interspersed with compelling chorus numbers, the oratorio tells the story of Jesus' birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection and final victory over sin and death. First performed in Dublin in 1742 and heralding the opening of Belfast's Ulster Hall in 1862, George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* has been performed regularly by

choirs since then and become a much-loved Christmas tradition. **Singing The Messiah – An Ards Christmas Choir is being produced by DoubleBand Productions, which has made a range of Ulster-Scots programmes including Brave New World and We The People. It will be broadcast on BBC Two Northern Ireland in December.**

WEANS' WURLD

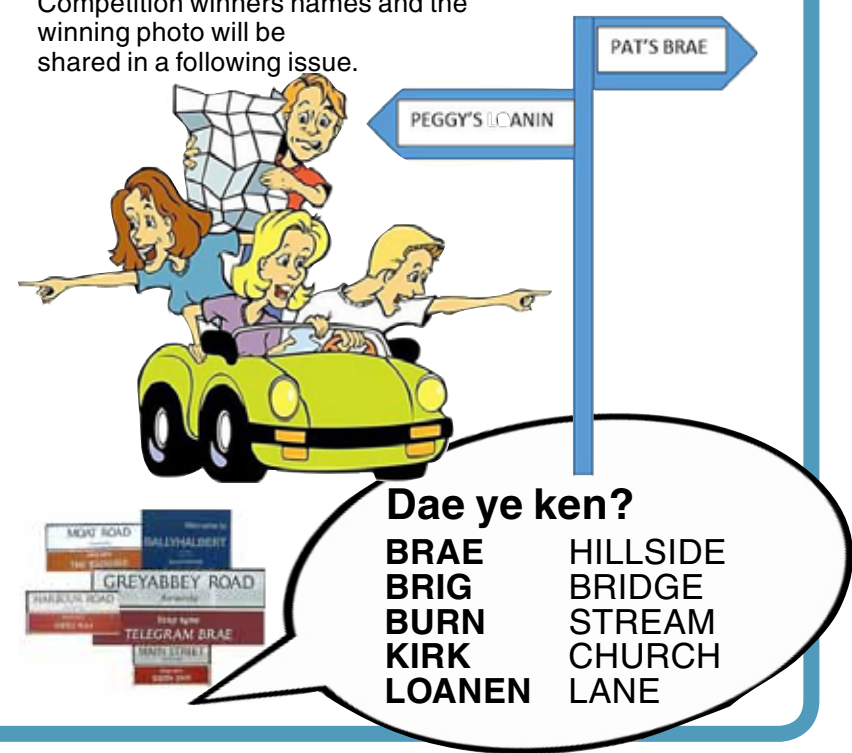
the Ulster-Scot COMPETITION

R J P D M P C T K M F M Z E N
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WIN A FAMILY PASS TO WE ARE VERTIGO

To be in with a chance of winning a family pass either:
 1. Complete Our Hamely Tongue word search;
 2. Send us your own poem/ limerick using Ulster-Scots words;
 or
 3. Send us a photo of any Ulster-Scots road names or place names (townlands) near you.
 Send your entries by email to competition@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk with Weans' Wurld competition (Nov) in the subject line. Please remember to include your name and contact details.

Alternatively post your answer to:
 Ulster-Scots Agency, The Corn Exchange,
 31 Gordon Street, Belfast, BT1 2LG
 Closing date: 9th December 2019
 Competition winners names and the winning photo will be shared in a following issue.



Now find these words....

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|-------|---------|
| BLETHER | QUARE | THRAN | HALLION |
| SLEEKIT | CRABBIT | WHEEN | WINDAE |
| THOLE | DANNER | JEUK | KEN |
| THONDER | GULDER | | |

Places to visit:



Thought you'd seen it all?
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