

# Leabhar-lann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

## National Library of Scotland

Draft Gaelic Language Plan  
2011-2016



# Foreword

The National Library of Scotland is pleased to present this draft statutory Gaelic Language Plan. At the heart of the Library's mission is the need to collect, preserve and provide access to Scotland's recorded culture. Gaelic forms a key element of this culture and we believe NLS holds the pre-eminent collection of Gaelic material in the world. We will continue adding to this material (both historic and contemporary content) and ensure that it is made available to all who would like to use, learn and take inspiration from it. This commitment is central to our Gaelic Language Plan, and we believe that this is a contribution to the vitality of the Gaelic language which NLS is uniquely able to make.

We also recognise the importance of Gaelic in the wider public policy of the Scottish Government and the Bòrd na Gàidhlig, represented through the National Plan for Gaelic and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Through this Plan, we believe that we will make a relevant and significant contribution to the sustainability of the Gaelic language and the esteem that it is held in, building on our long history of collecting, preserving and promoting our Gaelic collections. This has included collecting books, journals and other materials, establishing relations with publishers of Gaelic and hosting a range of educational and public events. Most notably, we have recently been able to make heavy investment in the digitisation of hundreds of thousands of pages of rare Gaelic books, an initiative of global significance. We include in this Plan the key commitment (in Action 13) to extend our curatorial expertise in Gaelic.

We very much welcome this opportunity to collect feedback from everyone interested in Gaelic, which we will take account of before formally submitting our Gaelic Language Plan to Bòrd na Gàidhlig.



**Martyn Wade**

National Librarian and Chief Executive

# Contents

1. Introduction

2. Collections

3. Education, Learning and Access

4. Corporate dimensions

5. Resources

6. Action Plan



Alexander Campbell (arr.). Albyn's anthology, or, A select collection of the melodies & vocal poetry peculiar to Scotland & the Isles, hitherto unpublished. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1816, 1818.

# I. Introduction

## Legal context

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with statutory criteria set out in the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005, and has regard to the National Plan for Gaelic 2007-12, the action plan Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig and the Guidance on the Development of Gaelic Language Plans. NLS was notified by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in August 2010 of the requirement to prepare a statutory five year Gaelic Language Plan. This must be submitted to the Bòrd by the end of July 2011.

In its notification, the Bòrd identified four high-level commitments for NLS:

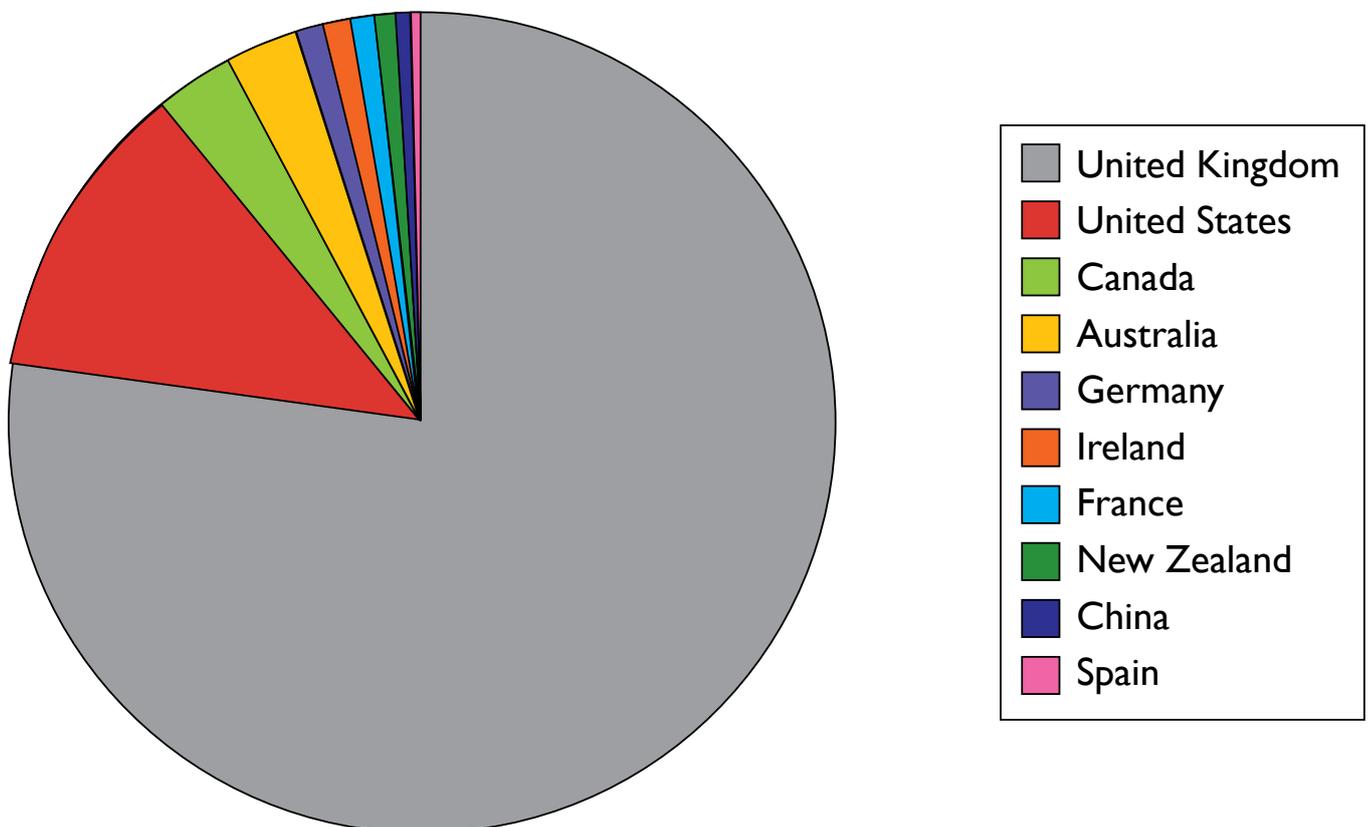
- Render the corporate logo bilingual (excluding the acronym NLS if wished), demonstrating equal respect for the languages, for general use on a new or replacement basis;
- Provide a methodology to agree the level of Gaelic to be included in interpretation, publications and signage, in visitor facilities, exhibitions and online, on a new or replacement basis;
- Develop specialised provision and services for Gaelic-speaking families and Gaelic Medium Education;
- To encourage the implementation and delivery of Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig with particular regard to Adult Learning and Gaelic Medium Education.

NLS has given careful consideration to this guidance and our response to these specific commitments is included in the Plan. In addition, much of the content of this Plan is influenced by an earlier version of a (non-statutory) plan produced by NLS in 2009 and by the National Library of Scotland's new corporate strategy, Connecting Knowledge. This strategy has as its key themes, Content and Connectivity. We see these themes as particularly relevant to our rich Gaelic collections and the crucial role NLS plays in connecting this content to Gaelic communities and potential audiences.

## The unique role of NLS

Central to the mission of NLS is the collection and preservation of Scotland's published record, so that it is accessible to all, now and in the future. This national record is a key part of the national heritage, and must be available for the use of future, as well as current, generations of researchers. Researchers interested in the Scottish national record come to NLS from all over the world, not only Scotland [see diagram, page 7]. These figures show that key audiences for NLS include countries with significant Scottish diaspora communities: Australia, New Zealand, and especially Canada and the USA.

### Origin of web traffic to www.nls.uk



Gaelic forms a crucial part of Scotland's cultural heritage. We believe that NLS has the largest collection of Scottish Gaelic material in the world - the extent and nature of this collection is outlined in Section 2. Our belief is that owing to the unique importance of this material, the greatest contribution that NLS can make to the esteem and long term sustainability of Gaelic is to focus on these collections, their preservation and promotion.



From The Book of Deer edited for the Spalding Club by John Stuart. Edinburgh, 1869. Oss.264

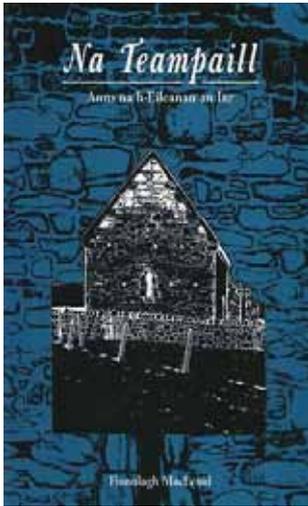
## Demographic data: Use of Gaelic within NLS' area of operation

As a national (and international) public body, all of Scotland's Gaelic speakers and communities fall within our area of operation.

According to the 2001 census, 92,400 people (1.9% of the Scottish population) were able to understand Gaelic, with 58,652 Gaelic speakers (1.2%). Of the Gaelic speakers, just over half lived in areas covered by Highland Council, Argyll & Bute Council and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles), with the remainder spread across the rest of Scotland. It should be noted that large concentrations of Gaelic speakers exist in urban Scotland, including Greater Glasgow where 19% of all Gaelic speakers live, Inverness, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh. The results of the 2001 census demonstrated that the number of speakers declined between 1991 and 2001; however, the numbers of those who could read and/or write Gaelic increased.

Across Scotland, Gaelic Medium Education (GME) is gaining recognition. In 2008, 2,164 pupils were currently accessing Gaelic-medium primary education, 968 pupils were studying Gaelic (fluent speakers) in secondary schools and 2,733 pupils were studying Gaelic learners' courses in secondary schools. 11% of Scottish schools currently offer Gaelic.

With the main National Library buildings situated in Edinburgh, the local Gaelic audience for our 'in-person' services is around 7,500 (in the Edinburgh travel-to-work area) when all those with some understanding of Gaelic are included, again based on the 2001 census. Of these, around 4,000 of those over three years old can read, write and/or speak Gaelic. Gaelic Medium Education is provided at Tollcross Primary, with 133 pupils in primary Gaelic Medium Education. There are 30 pupils studying Gaelic for fluent speakers at secondary level at present, which is expected to increase over the next few years. Courses offered by the Council, Telford College and the University of Edinburgh cover all levels of learning, and range from distance learning to postgraduate study.



Cover of Na teampaill anns na h-Eileanan an Iar by Fionnlagh MacLeòid (Acair, 1997)

## Evidence of customer demand for Gaelic services

In preparing this Plan, we carried out a survey of our staff in February 2011, both in order to establish a baseline of Gaelic language ability among our staff, and to gather information on the current demand in NLS for Gaelic services. We received responses from 169 of our 320 staff (a 53% completion rate).

Seven members of staff reported that they had encountered members of the public initiating conversations in Gaelic. This does not appear to be a frequent or regular occurrence; our experience of customer demand for Gaelic services has overwhelmingly related to items with Gaelic language or context contained within the collections and their interpretation.

In terms of staff understanding of Gaelic, the survey indicated that:

- 151 respondents (89%) could not understand, speak, read or write Gaelic
- Of the 18 respondents who indicated some ability to understand, speak, read or write Gaelic, 14 qualified this with comments about the limitations of their ability.
- One respondent is a fluent Gaelic speaker for whom Gaelic is a requirement for all aspects of day-to-day work - cataloguing, answering enquiries, assisting non-Gaelic speaking colleagues, and conducting media interviews on the work of the library and its collections.
- Nine respondents stated that they would like some sort of Gaelic language instruction made available at work.

Of the respondents who indicated they had some knowledge of Gaelic, around two thirds work in the Collections and Research Department (this Department contains about one third of our staff). Our Customer Services Department has smaller numbers of staff with some Gaelic and there is a single member of staff with some Gaelic in each of the Corporate Services and Development and External Relations Departments.

The findings of the survey are compatible with our approach to language planning that concentrates on our key functions of acquiring, interpreting and promoting Gaelic materials; how we will do this is described in the following sections.

## Structure of this Plan

This Plan is partially organised around a template for Gaelic Language Plans recommended by the Bòrd, but has been adapted in order to reflect the critical importance of the Gaelic collections to NLS.

Actions are numbered A1, A2 etc, and can be found both in the body of the Plan and also collected at the end in the Action Plan.

Public consultation will be carried out to ensure that the Plan is fit for purpose and appropriate, and that it meets the needs of our Gaelic-speaking audiences. We will take account of this feedback before finalising our plan for submission to the Bòrd.



Cover of an edition of Gaelic fairy tales

## 2. Collections

We believe that NLS holds the largest and most important collection of Scottish Gaelic in the world, comprising printed, manuscript, audiovisual and digital materials. We have eight of the very rare and in some cases unique Gaelic items printed before 1700 including the only known copy of the second book printed in Gaelic - 'Adtimchiol an chreidimh comhaghalluidhedar an maighiser, agas an leanamh' (a translation of John Calvin's 'Catéchisme de l'Eglise de Genève', 1631).

From 1710, the Library of the Faculty of Advocates (the forerunner of NLS) has had the privilege of Legal Deposit. This gives the legal entitlement to claim a copy of any book, journal or other printed item published in the UK or Ireland, and this is the foundation of our subsequent collecting; each year NLS receives over 200,000 newly-published items through this channel.

Our records indicate that we currently collect a total of around 210 items in the Gaelic language each year, including books, leaflets, newspapers and magazines. Many of these are collected through Legal Deposit, as we actively seek out such items for acquisition. Others are items that are donated or that we buy, where we cannot collect through Legal Deposit (such as material published abroad, typically from the Americas). We also collect many more publications that are principally published in English but which have some Gaelic content, such as newspapers which have a regular feature or comment column. Finally it should be noted that we have, and continue to add, very extensive manuscript collections and broadcast media, which are not included in these figures. Through this diverse activity, NLS collections have become the pre-eminent source for Gaelic research and scholarship in the world. We undertake to maintain, and if possible increase, our level of collection of Scottish Gaelic material by working closely with the Agency for the Legal Deposit Libraries to ensure that we collect all contemporary printed Gaelic material published in Scotland (Action A1).



From The Book of Deer edited for the Spalding Club by John Stuart. Edinburgh, 1869. Oss.264

The 2003 Legal Deposit Libraries Act permits this privilege to be extended from printed material to include also digital publications such as websites and electronic journals. We are working closely with the National Library of Wales and the British Library to make this happen and will actively seek out Scottish Gaelic-language material in our archiving programme of web publications (Action A2).

Our catalogues indicate that NLS holdings in Scottish Gaelic language and on Gaelic culture currently number around 4,600 printed items. In addition to the Library's many outstanding unique and rare printed Gaelic holdings, NLS also holds several hundred volumes of manuscripts, ranging from early treasures such as the Book of the Dean of Lismore and medieval medical works, to modern archives of organisations such as the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society. Some of these manuscript materials contain watercolours and other pictorial material by Gaelic authors and folklorists which would be suitable for promotion in collaboration with other cultural bodies such as the National Galleries of Scotland, whose aims we share.

The NLS Music Collections include various types of Gaelic music: Gaelic songs, Gaelic fiddle and pibroch tunes as well as educational material. Publications range from early printed editions such as Alexander Campbell's Albyn's anthology or Simon Fraser's Airs and melodies, to more modern publications such as A' Choisir-chiuil. The St. Columba collection of Gaelic songs or Aon, dhà, trì : orain i rannan cloinne, sean is ùr. Gaelic music sound recordings include early wax cylinders and shellac records as well as modern vinyl records and CDs.

We hold the only significant collection of Nova Scotian Gaelic literature outside Canada, and strive to maintain an awareness of and to collect comprehensively the global contemporary output in Gaelic of commercial, institutional, informal and electronic authorship.

NLS has staff with specialist expertise in Gaelic orthography and technical linguistic issues such as the standardisation of place-names. We see this expertise, which is maintained via links with Edinburgh University's School of Scottish Studies and other scholarly bodies, as supporting development of the Language Corpus as set out in the National Plan for Gaelic.

Since 1993 and in partnership with MG Alba, Scottish Screen Archive preserves Gaelic language television output funded wholly or in part by MG Alba. The collection currently comprises 5,000 titles on videotape with a running time in excess of 2,500 hours. SSA also preserves on film some of the television programmes transmitted by the independent television companies during the 1970s and 80s, as well as the first film to contain Gaelic in its soundtrack, namely Werner Kissling's 1935 production 'Eriskay: A Poem of Remote Lives'.

In addition, the 1989 Copyright Act allows NLS to record television programmes off-air, and all Gaelic language television output has been systematically recorded since January 1994. A database containing brief details of all Gaelic television output since January 1989 is added to on a weekly basis.



From The Book of Deer edited for the Spalding Club by John Stuart. Edinburgh, 1869. Oss.264

## 3. Education, Learning and Access

We see our key contribution to education and learning as ensuring that people have the opportunity to find, use and learn from our collections. Our flagship work in this field to date - which has focused primarily on Gaelic collections - is on digitisation.

Digitising unique and rare materials unlocks resources so that they can be accessed and used across the world. Digitisation also has great preservation benefits - fragile paper collections can be used without deterioration. Having digitised small numbers of 'treasures' for many years, in 2007-2009, NLS took its first steps into 'mass digitisation' with 3,000 items from special rare book collections (Ossian, J.F. Campbell, Hew Morrison, Matheson and Blair Collections) which are largely either written in Gaelic or have Gaelic themes. NLS digitised these five collections in their entirety, amounting to a total of some 430,000 pages at a cost of over £100,000.

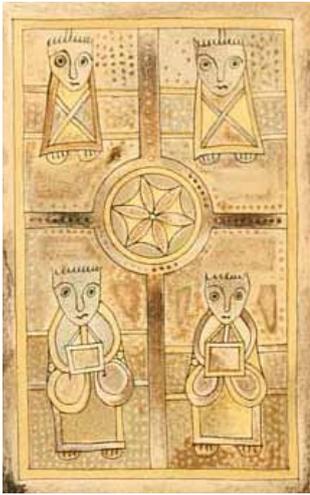
These collections are freely accessible through the NLS Digital Archive at <http://digital.nls.uk>. Public awareness of these digital collections has further been actively promoted by loading them into the Internet Archive ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)), where our data indicates the Gaelic titles receive nearly 20,000 views each month. We will build on this very significant work to improve the access to and visibility of Gaelic materials, by digitising further rare or unique Gaelic material not already contained in our Digital Objects Database, and prioritise for uploading to the Internet Archive (Action A3).

Over recent years, NLS has greatly expanded our educational work through outreach, events, workshops, exhibitions and digital learning resources, in keeping with our strategic commitment to make NLS more outward looking and accessible to all. An element of this work has always focused on Gaelic, with recent examples including a launch event for the StAnza programme featuring poems and traditional Gaelic music. Our Learning and Public Engagement staff are currently moving Great Escapes, a dual language walk on Mull which was developed as a project with pupils from Salen Primary School, to a new platform.

Our emphasis has recently moved towards producing online learning and education services for teachers and others, rather than providing direct one-to-one work. Through these channels we can reach far bigger audiences. More liaison work with the formal education sector is now done through collaboration with bodies such as Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and individual schools in developing teaching packs, and providing digitised image and interpretative material from collections. We produce learning packs which support the schools curriculum, and are currently adapting learning materials for the NLS Learning Zone, an online resource to meet the requirements of the new Curriculum for Excellence

Scottish Screen Archive is also in discussions with LTS (as one of the lead agencies for Action Area 5 - 5-18 Years Education - of Ginealach Ùr na Gàidhlig) about commissioning feature resources for Scotland on Screen





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## 4. Corporate dimensions

### Signage, branding and corporate identity

The Bòrd has asked NLS 'to provide a methodology to agree the level of Gaelic to be included in interpretation, publications and signage, in visitor facilities, exhibitions and online, on a new or replacement basis'. Our methodology will be to assess provision based on the following criteria:

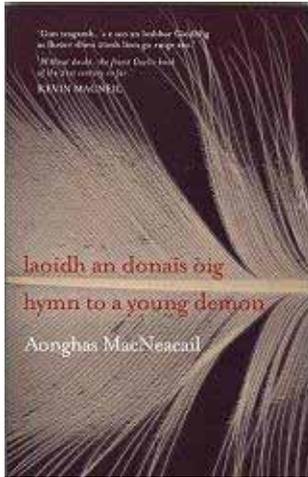
- Evidence of demand;
- Cost (taking account of possibilities for external funding such the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund);
- Intrinsic Gaelic relevance of programmes and exhibitions.

We will apply these criteria to signage with immediate effect. NLS currently has limited visibility of the Gaelic language in signage and corporate literature. Our 'welcome' signs in our flagship George IV Bridge building are echoed by 'Fàilte' signs and Gaelic is represented in our 'book fountain' at the entrance of the exhibitions area in the same building. With regard to exhibition signage, we will particularly draw connections between historical Gaelic-language material and the living language today, to avoid treating Gaelic as relevant only to antiquity (Action A9).

In practical terms, we expect that this methodology will lead to increased presence of Gaelic interpretative material where there is direct relevance; we would, for example, expect to include dual-language explanations of exhibited Gaelic books, and of Gaelic material online.

We also note that the Bòrd requests NLS to prepare a bi-lingual corporate logo. NLS commits to incorporate a Gaelic element as stated in the terms of the GLP notification in the corporate brand and logo, and has begun scoping design work which will be rolled out on a replacement basis commencing by April 1, 2012 (Action A10).

Our Development staff are actively examining eligibility criteria of various funding sources for work of this kind. We will produce costings for providing key customer orientation web pages in Gaelic.



Laoidh an donais òig = Hymn to a young demon / Aonghas MacNeacail (parallel text in Gaelic and English). Edinburgh: Polygon, 2007.

## Partnerships

This Plan has been developed in collaboration with National Galleries of Scotland and National Museums of Scotland, and these links will be maintained to develop effective policy and practice with respect to Gaelic (Action A11).

We will continue to build our relations actively with Gaelic publishers, MG Alba and the Gaelic Books Council to ensure completeness of collection. More broadly, we will identify and build, in a managed and planned way, relations with Gaelic stakeholders as part of our external relations strategy (Action A12).

Although by definition impossible to plan for, NLS will also remain vigilant for opportunities to develop partnerships on an ad hoc basis where they meet our strategic aims and deliver benefits to Gaelic communities and users cost-effectively. These may include, for example opportunities to develop our partnership activity with local libraries or with other national bodies.

## Staff capacity and development

As noted above, we currently have one member of staff fluent in Gaelic, based at the Scottish Screen Archive in Glasgow. We have organised Gaelic language classes for staff for a number of years; these have been attended by around 20 staff. Of these, three have progressed to SQA Higher level and undertaken other distance learning courses. In recent years, this programme has become more focussed to ensure that it fits closely to the skills and requirements of specific jobs, rather than as a general service for any staff, on the basis of 50% employer contribution to study time. Through these means, we have been able to meet requirements such as processing and cataloguing Gaelic language material and maintaining the Bibliography of Scottish Gaelic. However, following the retirement of staff in recent years, we no longer have specific in-depth curatorial expertise in Gaelic materials in Edinburgh. This is not a viable situation as it limits our ability to promote the use and research of a key component of our Scottish collections.

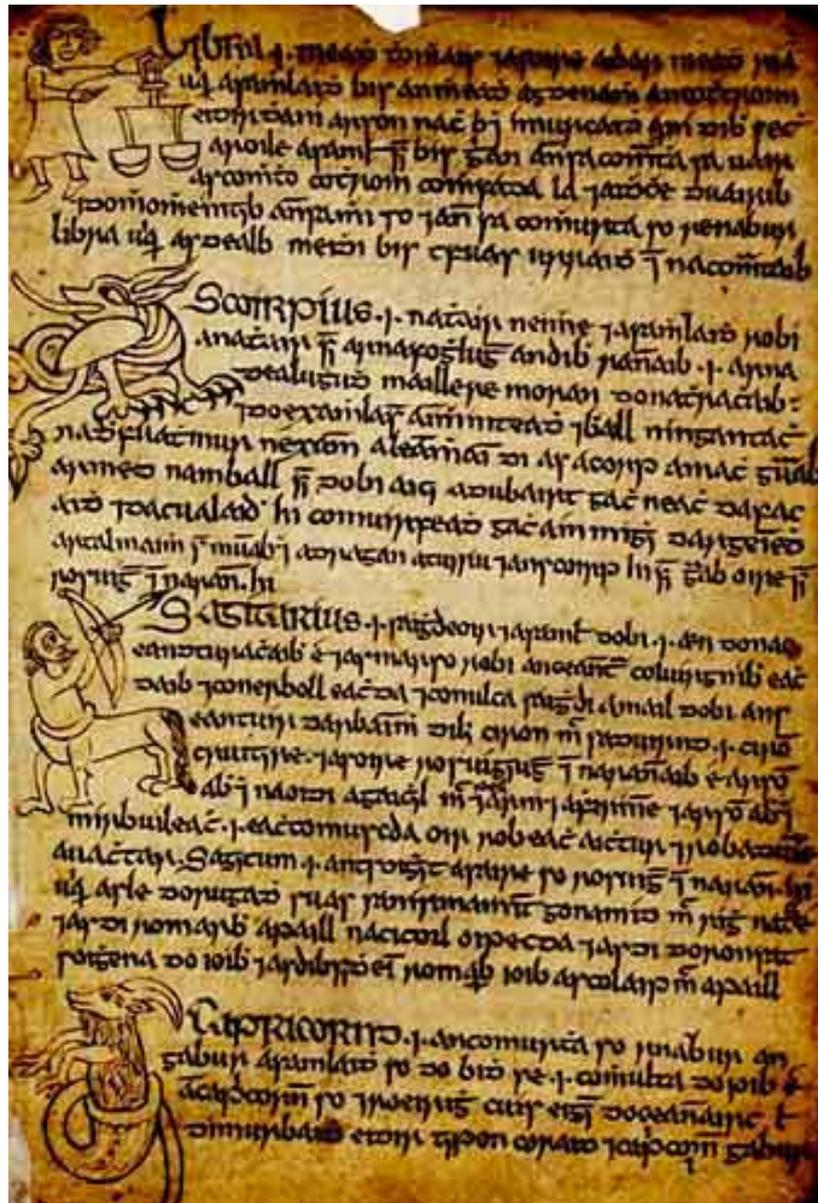
We therefore will recruit a member of staff to act as curator for Gaelic collections of all types (i.e. including books, journals, manuscripts, digital, music etc). This key commitment will bring significant additional capacity to NLS work in interpreting and promoting Scottish Gaelic resources, working closely with many other NLS staff who already have (and will continue to have) an interest and involvement in Gaelic subjects and materials (Action A13).

In addition, we will offer opportunities for other staff to increase awareness and understanding of the Gaelic language and its role in modern Scotland through sessions at our Learning at Work Week. This is a well-established and successful opportunity once or twice a year for staff to develop knowledge and awareness of subjects beyond their immediate functional requirements. We will look for opportunities to collaborate with sister organisations such as NGS and NMS in such events (Action A14).

## 5. Resources

The resources available to NLS have, in common with other public bodies, been reduced as part of overall public spending limits. Our revenue grant for 2011-12 is 4.4% lower than for 2010-11. Our grant for purchases was reduced from £1.3 million to £0.7 million (subsequently supplemented through internal re-allocation of budgets). This means that we face painful choices on how we allocate spending, and this applies to spending on Gaelic initiatives as on other activities. We therefore aim to ensure as far as possible that this Plan does not generally commit NLS to new spending commitments which would force us to make even more cuts in other services.

However, in view of the importance of Gaelic, we are actively exploring the possibilities for expanding our capacity in Gaelic, including the key area of curator recruitment. We will pursue funding options for all the initiatives in this Plan and will look to exploit opportunities to bring project funding in to support specific initiatives (Action A15).



Page from a sixteenth century treatise on astronomy

# 6. Action Plan

	Action	Date	Costs	Comments
	<b>Collecting</b>			
A1	Collect contemporary Scottish Gaelic material as completely as possible	ongoing	Within existing budgets (for non-broadcast material, this is around £2,500)	We currently collect about 210 printed Gaelic items each year, mostly through Legal Deposit. Processing and cataloguing costs are approximately £10 per item. We will continue to buy Gaelic material in other media such as manuscript or film which are not currently covered by Legal Deposit legislation and to add to our broadcast collections.
A2	Ensure inclusion of representative Scottish Gaelic websites in web archiving activities	1.10.2011	Within existing budgets	In common with other UK Legal Deposit libraries, we will increasingly collect electronic publications such as websites. NLS will take account of Gaelic material in our collecting policy.
	<b>Education, Learning and Access</b>			
A3	Digitise further Gaelic materials	1.4.2013	Within existing budgets	There are many more out-of-copyright Gaelic books suitable for digitisation not included in Internet Archive Gaelic Books Project. We will prepare external funding bids; Rare Books, and Music curators will identify 50 books for inclusion in our 2012-13 digitisation programme.
A4	Develop resources of relevance to Gaelic culture on Scotland on Screen website	1.10.2011	Funding from LTS	Scottish Screen Archive will lead this, in conjunction with Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS).
A5	Produce one flagship resource for Learning Zone with Gaelic heritage/history theme, in dual languages – subject to available resources	1.4.2014	To be determined	We will prepare an application to the Gaelic Language Act Implementation Fund to fund this initiative.
A6	Develop specialised provision and services for Gaelic-speaking families and Gaelic Medium Education	2011-13	Within existing budgets	We are exploring opportunities for incorporating Gaelic-related materials into schools' learning packs as these are updated to bring them into line with Curriculum for Excellence.
A7	Promote Bibliography of Scottish Gaelic (BOSG) and investigate expanding its scope	1.10.2011	Within existing budgets	Measure: monitor the searches and use of BOSG.
A8	Seek and respond to opportunities for lending Gaelic material	2011-13	Within existing budgets	We will seek and respond to opportunities to lend Gaelic collection items to partner bodies where access, preservation and security conditions are appropriate.
	<b>Corporate dimensions</b>			
A9	Implement the methodology set out in section 4 above to evaluate the need for Gaelic in signage, labeling and online	2011- on	Within existing budgets	The methodology to agree the level of Gaelic to be included in interpretation, publications and signage, in visitor facilities, exhibitions and online, will be put in place immediately.
A10	Design and implement new dual language NLS logo	2011-12	Within existing budgets	We intend to make the NLS logo bi-lingual in English and Gaelic; to be implemented incrementally, beginning by end of 2011-12
A11	Maintain links with partners like National Galleries of Scotland and National Museums of Scotland to extend collaboration on developing effective Gaelic policy and practice	2011- on	Within existing resources	This Plan has been developed in collaboration with National Galleries of Scotland and National Museums of Scotland, and these links will be developed in devising worthwhile and cost effective actions.
A12	Identify and build, in a managed and planned way, relations with Gaelic stakeholders	2011- on	Within existing resources	Our partnership activity will specifically include an assessment of Gaelic dimensions. We will continue to build our relations actively with Gaelic publishers and the Gaelic Books Council to ensure completeness of collection.
A13	Appoint a curator with specific responsibility for Gaelic collections	2011-2013	£31,500 (but within overall resources)	We will recruit a curator (provisionally costed at NLS Band 5 staff scale) with skills and knowledge in Gaelic language, history and culture to interpret and promote Gaelic collections of all kinds. The timing of this appointment will be dependent on vacancies and turnover but is expected within the next two years.
A14	Offer Gaelic language awareness sessions in 'Learning at Work Week'	2011 - on	Within existing resources	NLS holds one or two 'Learning at Work' weeks each year; we will introduce session for our staff, and if interested the staff of other cultural bodies such as NGS and NMS, covering awareness of Gaelic.
A15	Seek project funding to support opportunities to enhance our work in collecting, preserving and making accessible Gaelic collections	2011- on	None	NLS will be revising its fundraising strategy during 2011, with the completion of the major John Murray Archive project; this will include identifying and exploiting opportunities to collect, preserve and promote Gaelic collections.

# Acknowledgements

NLS thanks the National Galleries of Scotland for permission to incorporate much of the demographic data from their draft Gaelic Language Plan.

Thanks to Eric Dickson, Legal Deposit Assistant Curator, who prepared a draft non-statutory GLP for NLS as part of his CILIPS chartership project in 2008-09, which contributed many of the ideas in this Plan.

Once this consultation has been completed and the final version of the Plan agreed with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the Plan will be published in both Gaelic and in English.

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 3 of the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact 0131 623 3762 to discuss your needs.

This Gaelic Language Plan is a draft version for public consultation which closes on 8 July 2011.

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