

## **A Note from the Orkney Conference: Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches**

Caroline Macafee

Caroline Macafee gave a presentation on the Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches (TaD) project, partly using slides prepared by the project director, Mairead MacDonald.

A wealth of stories, oral tradition, songs and music, constituting a unique record of Scotland's cultural and linguistic heritage, will be digitally preserved. Free online access to the recordings will ensure that they are widely available for educational and personal use. The material is being catalogued using a wide range of searchable fields, including summaries (in Gaelic as well as English for Gaelic-language recordings).

TaD is digitising sound recordings from the collections of BBC Scotland, the National Trust and the School of Scottish Studies (SoSS), a pool of c. 12,000 hours. The BBC material comprises Gaelic programming from the 1950s onwards, including recordings of Mods. The National Trust archive is the Canna collection of John Lorne Campbell, recorded from the mid 1930s on, including some wax cylinders made before portable disc-cutting machine became available c. 1938. Campbell was one of the founders of the Folklore Institute of Scotland, a precursor to the SoSS. The SoSS material, from the 1950s on, includes Scots and English as well as Gaelic recordings. Gaelic makes up c. 55% of the 10,000 hours in the SoSS collection.

Mairead MacDonald manages the £3M+ project, with its staff of over 40, from the head office at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig. There are also offices in South Uist and Edinburgh, and cataloguers working from home around the country. The Heritage Lottery Fund is the largest sponsor, with the remainder of the funding coming from a wide range of organisations, including the European Regional Development Fund, Aberdeen University, Argyll Council, Argyll and the Isles Enterprise, BBC, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, British Telecom, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Edinburgh University, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Highland Council, Lews Castle College, Lochaber Enterprise, the Management Review Group for Gaelic (MRG), MG Alba, the National Trust for Scotland, the

Macafee, Caroline. 2010. 'A Note from the Orkney Conference: Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches'. In Millar, Robert McColl (ed.) 2010. *Northern Lights, Northern Words. Selected Papers from the FRLSU Conference, Kirkwall 2009*. Aberdeen: Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ireland, 214-5. ISBN: 978-0-9566549-1-5

Scottish Government, the School of Scottish Studies, Skye and Lochalsh Enterprise, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Western Isles Enterprise.

The history of TaD began in 1994 when Comunn na Gàidhlig commissioned Dr John Shaw's feasibility report *Dualchais- Gaelic Cultural Heritage, Community and Technology 1994*. In 1998 Dr Martin MacIntyre was appointed as Project Coordinator. In 2000, Pròiseact Thiriodh, an online pilot, was unveiled. 30 hours of Tìree material from BBC Alba and the School of Scottish Studies were digitised and then catalogued on Tìree by members of the community ([www.tiriodh.ed.ac.uk](http://www.tiriodh.ed.ac.uk)). In 2003, the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded the project £1.39M. In 2006, Mairead MacDonald was appointed as Director. A recent milestone was a performance at the 2009 Celtic Connections by TaD staff, showcasing the wealth of songs and tunes that will be available on the website. The past and present cataloguers include well-known Gaelic and Scots singers and musicians: Steve Byrne, Kenna Campbell, Naomi Harvey, Griogair Lawrie, Ishbel T. MacDonald, Gillebrìde MacMillan, Calum Munro, Maighread Stewart, Sheena Wellington and Chris Wright. Others include former teachers, lecturers, journalists, and a number of graduates of the SoSS.

This resource will obviously be of enormous value to a wide range of users, including schools, colleges and universities, researchers, musicians, local history societies and people with a personal interest in the individuals, places, topics and languages involved. To illustrate the riches available, Dr Macafee drew attention to Travellers' cant, gave some examples of additions to the record of Scots language lexicography, and played some sample recordings. The website will go live in 2010. In the meantime, some samples of the material and further information can be found at [www.tobarandualchais.co.uk](http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk).