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Feisean nan Gaidheal

Annual Report
1993

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Feisean nan Gaidheal

SUMMARY OF WORK: MAY 1992 - JUNE 1993

BACKGROUND

The work of **Feisean nan Gaidheal** has been advanced considerably since the post of Development Officer was filled in June 1993. A **Development Plan** has been drafted and was approved by the members at the Annual General Meeting in Inverness on May 7th. The plan contains details of the main projects **Feisean nan Gaidheal** wishes to become involved in for the benefit of all the Feisean, and it should become a lot easier to attract funding with the completion of the document.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

The Development Officer has been responsible for the day-to-day running of **Feisean nan Gaidheal**, with back-up from the **National Gaelic Arts Project** staff.

The Financial Statement for 1992-93 produced by **Frame Kennedy & Forrest** forms part of this report, along with explanatory notes on some of the income and expenditure.

Funding for **Feisean nan Gaidheal** and the Feisean comes from a wide variety of sources and we are very grateful for the financial support of the following bodies in 1992-93:

**Highland Regional Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise,
Scottish Arts Council, Strathclyde Regional Council, Scottish Television,
Grampian Television, Comataidh Telebhisein Gaidhlig,
Lochaber District Council, Lochaber LEADER, Argyll & Bute District Council
and Skye & Lochalsh District Council**

Funding from a variety of sources has been sought for 1993-94 and so far around £42,000.00 has been agreed.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors met 4 times in 1993-94. The current board members following elections at the recent AGM are:

**Margaret MacTaggart (Feis Ile), Rita Hunter, Company Secretary (Feis Rois),
Maire MacPhail (Feis Tir an Eorna), Margaret Ann Beggs (Feis Bharraigh), Charlie
Menzies (Feis Chataibh), John MacDonald (Feis an Earraich),
Nan Smith (Feis Eilean an Fhraoich), Jim Morrison (HRC Community Education)
and Malcolm MacLean (National Gaelic Arts Project)**

The Chair of the Board is vacant at present following **Duncan MacLeod's** retiral due to ill-health. We are all grateful for the tireless work carried out by Duncan in establishing **Feisean nan Gaidheal** and wish him a full and speedy recovery. As a consequence of Duncan's retiral, this report has been delayed and there is also no Chairman's report.

During the year, **Flora MacPhail** and **Nan Kearney** also resigned as Directors, and thanks must go to them for their contribution.

PROJECTS

Over the year, **Feisean nan Gaidheal** has progressed the following projects:

Follow-up tuition A programme of workshops for children took place in Inverness, Airdrie, Coatbridge, Arran, East Kilbride, Islay and Mull as part of a pilot project set up to investigate the possibilities for the provision of continued tuition after the Feisean.

Training workshops Two training workshops were held for tutors; one in Plockton in February and one in Inverness in June. Both were very successful. From the first one came the strong support for much more communication between tutors to enable the exchange of ideas and material. Training has been made a priority for 1993-94, and a series of training days will take place for tutors, with the establishment of an annual National Training Day.

Links with formal education The Development Officer sat on a Highland Region committee looking into ways of providing traditional music tuition within the formal education system. A paper outlining the committee's recommendations has been submitted to the council and the outcome is awaited.

Insurance **Feisean nan Gaidheal** has been trying for some time to secure insurance for the Feisean on a *blanket* basis. This has proved very difficult particularly with the cover required for musical instruments, and several companies have in fact turned us down. It does look quite likely however that **Sun Alliance and London Assurance** may be prepared to provide cover.

Poster/calendar A new poster/calendar was produced in 1992 and with the numbers of Feisean still growing, this will need to be updated in 1994.

Tutors' directory The tutors' directory is to be updated in 1993, with the assistance of Highland Regional Council's JET Unit in Skye. They have offered to update our database of tutors and keep it updated after the production of a new tutors' directory.

Newsletter The Development Officer and the Feisean have contributed to several newsletters produced by various bodies, including CnaG's *Uinneagan* and *FELA* (Fìolm is Ealainean Leirsinneach na h-Alba). A need has been expressed however for **Feisean nan Gaidheal** to revert to producing its own newsletter for the Feisean.

Feis handbook Work has started on producing a handbook for communities wishing to start a Feis in their area. This is being done in conjunction with members of Highland Regional Council's Community Education Service and Rita Hunter of Feis Rois.

Local Feis Development Plans Continued funding for the Feisean is vital, and one way of strengthening the arguments of the Feisean, is for them all to draft their own 3-5 year Development Plans outlining their aims and objectives and funding requirements over that period. **Feisean nan Gaidheal** will assist with the drawing up of these plans and this has been given high priority.

Musical instrument bank An application is currently being considered by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts for grant-aid towards the establishment of a bank of musical instruments which will be available to all the Feisean.

Traditional music resources Feisean nan Gaidheal has commissioned a traditional music workbook and this is now at the mock-up stage. Funding will be sought for publication.

Working with other bodies The Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland has shown an interest in working much more closely with Feisean nan Gaidheal and this is a move we must actively encourage. Both organisations have a lot to offer those wishing to learn traditional music skills.

In addition, the Development Officer has been engaged in a great deal of research, visiting most of the Feisean and linking with other bodies. The following is a summary of meetings, conferences and festivals attended by the Development Officer (not including Feisean):

Highland Regional Council Traditional Music Working Party
Regular meetings with CnaG/NGAP employees
Highland Regional Council Community Education
Principal Community Education Officers' Conference
British Council Festival of Celtic Music, Barcelona
Pan-Celtic Festival, Galway
Gaelic Development in Argyll & Bute Conference
Air adhart le Gaidhlig Conference
Western Isles Enterprise and Western Isles Feis representatives
Meetings in Mull, Inverness, Islay, Arran and Assynt to establish Feisean
Meetings with the committees of Feisean
Regular meetings with various funding bodies on behalf of the Feisean

FEISEAN

The Development Officer attended most of the established Feisean in 1992/early 1993. New Feisean have started this year in Mull, Arran, Inverness, Fort Augustus, Lochaber and Islay, with the possibility of a new one in Assynt next year and the resurrection of Feis Mhealainis.

In addition, the Development Officer attended several committee meetings with various established Feisean whilst conducting research for the Development Plan, and to allow these Feisean the opportunity to ask questions about Feisean nan Gaidheal's work.

On production of the draft Development Plan, the Development Officer attended meetings with Feis committees who wished to comment on its content before the final Plan was prepared.

Following a presentation given by the Development Officer at the Principal Community Education Officers' Conference in Nairn, considerable interest in the Feis Movement was expressed from many Community Education workers outwith the traditional Feis areas. It looks likely that Feisean may be established in many different places throughout the next year or two.

This prompted questions at the **Feisean nan Gaidheal** AGM about what constituted a Feis, and how much Gaelic was used or should be used at the Feisean. It was concluded that while we would not exclude anyone wishing to learn about the Feis movement, it would be advisable to restrict Corporate Membership of the organisation to those Feisean with a Gaelic content.

Minutes of all meetings of the **Feisean nan Gaidheal** Board and all other relevant papers will be sent to member-Feisean and members of **Feisean nan Gaidheal** as soon as possible after each meeting. Members should feel free at any time to contact the Development Officer or any Board member for any information pertaining to the organisation, and with any items for the agenda at Board meetings.

Funding for the Feisean is something we are all aware of at all times. Funding partners must be established for the Feisean, and **Feisean nan Gaidheal** has had, and will have a major part to play in co-ordinating fund-raising and lobbying at a national and international level on behalf of the Feisean.

In conclusion, thanks must go **Frank Rennie**, the **National Gaelic Arts Project**, **Comunn na Gaidhlig** and **Highland Regional Council's Community Education Department** for their assistance both *in kind* and otherwise with the work of the Company throughout 1992-93. Thanks must also go to the members of **Feisean nan Gaidheal** for their support. We hope we can count on your continued support in 1993-94; **Feisean nan Gaidheal** belongs to the Feisean, and we are here to work on behalf of the membership.

Arthur Cormack

Feisean nan Gaidheal Development Officer
August 1993