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Rachel Barrowman, ed., *Eachdraidh le Càirdeas is Cridhe. Ainmean-àite Ceann a Tuath Leòdhais, Nis Gu Baile an Truiseil. History with Heart and Soul. The Place-names of North Lewis, Ness to Ballantrushal* (Acair, Stornoway, 2020), 410pp. £25. ISBN: 978-1-789-07-048-4.

This book, by Comann Eachdraidh Nis, takes its title from a line by the late Tormod Caimbeul (Tormod a' Bhocsair) stating this to be 'Eachdraidh le càirdeas is cridhe' (translated here as 'a History with Heart and Soul'). Tormod (alias Norman Campbell), from Dail bho Dheas, was well known in the wider Gaelic world as a novelist and writer. He was one of the prime movers in Comann Eachdraidh Nis, a grassroots oral history project which set out from the 1970s onwards to capture as much of the living history of the north of Lewis as possible. Teams of volunteers from the Comann Eachdraidh started interviewing people in the area to record their life experience, amassing a great deal of recorded material and lore in the process, material which is now held at the Comann Eachdraidh's archive, at Sgoil Chrois, Nis (Ness).¹ Archaeological work in the area, from 2003, by Rachel Barrowman and Chris Barrowman, in tandem with the Comann Eachdraidh, led to a parallel survey of the place-names, traditions and folklore in the area.² This collection of place-names and associated tradition was undertaken by local fieldworkers, Màiri NicIomhair and Cairistìona a' Bhocsair (Cairistìona Nic a' Ghobhainn). After a hiatus, this work has now been completed. The resulting book, *Eachdraidh le Càirdeas is Cridhe*, edited by Rachel Barrowman, acknowledges the breadth of community involvement (contributors are named, pp. 10-17) at all stages of the project. The resulting collection of onomastic and ethnographic material captures a sense of the life, language and culture and a great deal of social history in rural north Lewis, giving us a snapshot of a Gaelic community as it was perceived by its actors (rather than by third parties) in the twentieth century. This will need no selling to people from the north of Lewis, of course – but what of anyone else?

Each of the 18 chapters which focus on each of the bailtean (townships) starts with a detailed list of place-names, complete with eight-digit OS grid references that give us these place-names as they were (and are) used in the community and which are not recorded anywhere else. The place-name

¹ Comann Eachdraidh Nis drew on these extensive materials to commemorate the Great War of 1914-1918 from a community perspective in a recent publication which was shortlisted for Saltire Society book of the year, 2015. D.A. Morrison, ed., *The Going down of the Sun. The Great War and a rural Lewis Community / Dol Fodha na Grèine. Buaidh a' Chogaidh Mhòir – Nis gu Baile an Truiseil* (Comann Eachdraidh Nis, Acair, 2014), 413pp.

² The place-name collection project was a spin-off from the Dùn Èistean project – which was an archaeological investigation into the ruins of a fortified medieval sea-stack in Ness associated with the Britheamh or Brieve kindred of hereditary lawmen *alias* Clan Morrison in the 16th and 17th century. For this, see Rachel Barrowman, ed., *Dùn Èistean. The Archaeology of a Clan Stronghold* (Acair, Stornoway, 2015), 454pp. There was also a substantial and related archaeological fieldwork survey in the area, Chris S. Barrowman, *The Archaeology of Ness* (Acair, Stornoway, 2015), 324pp.

corpus produced here for Baile Thàboist (*alias* Habost), for example, draws on material from 10 informants and gives us over 80 minor place-names unknown to the Ordnance Survey. Similarly, nine informants for the twin townships of Siadar Uarach and Siadar Iarach (*alias* Upper and Lower Shader) furnish us with nearly 300 place-names, none of which are known to the OS. These place-names are plotted onto detailed maps, making it easy for the reader to locate them.

Two supplementary chapters provide us with a valuable set of recollections of life in rural Lewis. The first of these, on àirighean (sheilings), furnish us with eyewitness accounts of transhumance: the seasonal movement of livestock to summer grazing on the moors, a practice which continued until the 1940s and beyond in north Lewis. This section gives us detailed information on place-names but also provides an important primary source for the social history of a vanished way of life. The final chapter, on 'tobraichean' (wells) is a little thinner but again gives us detailed place-name information and indicates the importance of community wells in people's everyday life. These wells remained in daily use until the mid 1980s – as water supplies provided by the local authority (from the late 1950s onwards) long remained peaty and unpalatable. The tobraichean could be great meeting places as well as providing high quality water - but the recollections posted here make no mention of aching arms and backs. Carrying buckets or containers of water was hard work!

The lists of place-names provided at the beginning of each chapter are supported by narrative extracts from some of the informants' interviews which help contextualise these place-names. We are given a verbal guided tour of their village, its places, and what these place-names meant to people (in some cases these verbal tours are augmented with a memory map). This volume, although bilingual, sets out to capture something of the distinctive flavour of north Lewis Gaelic in which these interviews were conducted. It is beautifully produced and copiously illustrated, with a glossary of Gaelic terms provided by two stalwarts of the Comann Eachdraidh, Anna Mhurdaig (Annie MacSween) and Iain Gòrdon Dòmhnallach.

Anyone (apart from place-name scholars!) put off by the emphasis in the title on place-names (onomastics), should think again. This will be of value to onomastics scholars, of course, but it has a broader interest too. This is a book by and about a Gaelic community. The community's Gaelic speech is front and centre here – as it should be – but this is made more widely accessible by the facing English translation of the text.

To sum up, then, this book gives us a kaleidoscopic view of peoples' life, work, sense of place and lived experience in a vibrant community in the Gàidhealtachd during the 20th century. It speaks to the relationship between people and their land (and with each other). This is the lens through which place-names are viewed here. This is a History with 'càirdeas is cridhe:' History *by* the people and *for*

the people, part of the fruit of the Comunn Eachraidh's pioneering work in Ness over the last two generations. Anyone with an interest in community, in social or rural history or in Gaelic Scotland should find something that speaks to them from this book. There will be much here, whether in accounts of people's lives, experiences or *caithe-beatha* (way of life) that readers from other parts of the Gàidhealtachd will find familiar. One hopes, as Dr Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart observes in the frontpiece, that this will 'provide an example and encouragement to other districts in the Gaelic world that they might try the same.'

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