

REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP ON THE SCOTS LANGUAGE

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1. Chairman's Foreword.

The Ministerial Working Group on the Scots Language was convened with the remit of devising and presenting a radical vision for the development of the language, with realistic recommendations on how this vision may be achieved. All members of the MWG have established reputations for active work with and for the Scots tongue, as creative writers, broadcasters, publishers and/or academics with scholarly expertise in both the history and the present state of Scots; and all are keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of its position in diverse areas of the national life and of the gaps between its actual status and that which it should rightfully have as one of the languages of the Scottish nation. The Government's new commitment to a policy of active support for Scots had been welcomed and enthusiastically supported by all members, and the founding of this Working Group was seen from the outset as an unprecedented opportunity to bring about a major improvement in the status of Scots. It was never to be expected that the members' opinions on any given question would be absolutely identical; but the bedrock of the group's discussions was a common acceptance of the following principles as elemental —given's:

- a. Scots is, along with Gaelic and English, one of the three indigenous languages of Scotland.
- b. As such, it should as a matter of right have an established, institutionalised and formally recognised place in all aspects of the national life, comparable to that enjoyed by Welsh in Wales and Scottish Gaelic in Scotland.
- c. The profile of Scots is better in this respect than it was until well within living memory, but it is still very far from having the recognition or the status which is its due.
- d. This being the case, it is necessary that the existing unsatisfactory situation should be changed.

Motivated by this common commitment, the members of the MWG have, in the course of several meetings, discussed both the actual and the desirable state of Scots, focusing (as was agreed at the first meeting) on the following fields:

Education

Broadcasting

Literature and the Arts

International Contacts

Public Awareness

Dialects

Clearly these are not self-contained and mutually isolated fields, and their interaction indeed was a frequent focus of the group's discussions; however, for convenience the group's recommendations will be made under these headings. Each meeting was devoted principally to discussion of one or two of these issues: the normal procedure was for a discussion paper to be prepared by one of the members and circulated in advance of the meeting. Discussions were predictably lively and wide-ranging, each member contributing from his or her individual range of knowledge and expertise; and it is safe to say that the members' understanding of the various issues was greatly enhanced and clarified by this sharing of thoughts and experiences. A point repeatedly made was that the enormous reservoir of

knowledge and expertise on Scots among creative writers, academics and ordinary speakers, and the enormous body of readily-accessible information in the form of dictionaries and other reference works, research publications and online resources such as the Dictionary of the Scots Language (<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>) and the website of the Scots Language Centre (<http://www.scotslanguage.com/>), had hardly been recognised, much less exploited, either by policy-makers or by the general public.

As all members understood, it was necessary throughout to retain a sense of realism. One consideration is that the present unsatisfactory (though improving) state of Scots is the result of long-term social and cultural developments of which the effects cannot be easily or quickly countered. Many contingent factors must be taken into account in our efforts at improving the status of the language: most particularly, the general level of understanding of matters relating to language and its use is low in Scotland; and this must be addressed by far-reaching educational reforms to provide a context in which action in support of Scots can be sure of making real progress. Another factor is that Governmental initiatives must be shaped and pursued in the context of a given political and economic ambience in which even highly desirable moves may not be practically possible. Throughout its meetings, the group endeavoured to strike a balance between enthusiasm for the cause of Scots and recognition of the limitations on what can at present be achieved: the presence of experienced civil servants among the membership was of great help in this.

The present report contains the substance of the Group's discussions, and a set of recommendations which we believe are both desirable and achievable. To speak personally, I have felt myself honoured and privileged at being able to chair this Group.

2. Executive Recommendations

This section contains what the Group has selected as the most important general recommendations, omitting some more specific and detailed suggestions that emerged during the Group's discussions. Some of those will be included in Section 3 of the report. In each section, the first one or two of the recommendations will be offered as "key" recommendations. These will be printed in bold type

1. General

The following are seen by the Group as foundation moves, which will confirm the Scottish Government's goodwill towards Scots and commitment to furthering its development. They will require to be backed up by specific actions focused on individual areas, for which suggestions are offered in subsequent sections.

- a. The Scottish Government should develop a national Scots Language policy with reference to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; and this should be enshrined in an Act of Parliament.**
- b. The Scottish Government should consolidate and strengthen the existing Scots bodies to create a source of expert advice on all aspects of the Scots language to the government, the media and other public organisations. The Scots Language Centre, by virtue of its existing network of contacts and web presence is ideally placed to be the key agency in managing incoming requests and redirecting them, as necessary, to the appropriate organisation or individual. Scottish Language Dictionaries also has a network of specialist advisors built up over many years and can provide scholarly support.
- c. Sources should be determined to secure long term funding for the organisations noted above which provide support and encouragement for Scots.
- d. All media organisations, and all agencies in the cultural sector which receive Government funding, should be actively encouraged to develop specific Scots language policies

2. Education

This is one of the areas in which action is most urgently required, at all levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary (the latter including teacher training). The situation is particularly critical in that the current lack of resources and priority for Scots in education endangers all the ground-breaking progress made in recent years. The growth of expertise in Scots teaching is an asset to Scotland's education system; but it will be lost if not sustained by government action."

The Curriculum for Excellence provides a highly promising environment for the development of educational policies and practices to benefit Scots and its introduction is an opportunity which must be exploited; but as the restoration of Scots to full health requires a radical improvement in popular understanding of wider language issues, the Government's task here goes beyond the specific provision for Scots in schools, colleges and universities. The Group's recommendations should be seen in this wider context.

Key Recommendation

- a. **In light of the announcement that Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) are to re-organise as Scottish Education Quality and Improvement Agency (SEQIA), there is now an historic opportunity for the Scottish Government to create a dedicated permanent Scots Language/ Scottish Literature Bureau within the new organisation to meet the growing demand from Scotland's teachers for high-quality training, information and resources.**
- b. A nationwide Network of Coordinators able to deliver Scots language training and advice on resources should be formed. Ideally, relevant local authorities should have at least one primary and one secondary Scots language Coordinator on the model which has been so successful in Falkirk. In the short term, funding could be made available to train Scots language Coordinators in a small number of target local authorities. SEQIA could play a key role in training and administering such a network. The resulting benefits for educational priorities such as Literacy, Social Inclusion, Creativity, Learning Across the Curriculum and Scottish Identity would give a significant return on any government investment.
- c. To support delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence, a dedicated national Scots language educational website should be commissioned to provide free high-quality teaching resources. Any new website could be modelled on the current on-line LTS Gaelic Resource Bank and the LTS Scotland's History website; and the online information point on Scots published in 2010 by LTS Literacy, which has proved extremely popular with teachers but offers only limited teaching resources, could be expanded.
- d. Chairs in Scottish Literature and Language should be established in all Scottish Universities. To facilitate this the Scottish Government should encourage patronage from Scottish companies.
- e. Teacher training in Scotland urgently needs to recognise the importance of Scots and provide more instruction in the language for students. To facilitate the teaching of literacy in Scots, the language should form part of all Initial Teacher Education courses; a Scots Continuous Professional Development programme should be designed and introduced to all primary and secondary school at the earliest opportunity; educational publishers should be advised of this, and of the need for usable Scots text books.
- f. Funding should be directed to producing and distributing educational resources such as dictionaries, grammars and reading materials
- g. The importance of online material should be recognised, and existing educational resources such as the excellent websites of the Scots Language Centre and Scottish Language Dictionaries should be actively publicised and developed.
- h. Recognition of dialect diversity in Scotland, and active interest in all regional and social dialects, should be an integral part of the Government's educational policy for both primary and secondary schools.

3. Broadcasting

Here as elsewhere, the Group's desideratum is that the place of Scots in broadcasting and the media should be greatly increased, but not only by augmenting the number of programmes which are specifically in or about Scots: rather, that this should happen concurrently with an increase in the use of Scots in contexts where it is not being —flaged up”. Scots will eventually, it is hoped, be heard in programmes of all kinds, native speakers using the language in any and all contexts. The recommendations given here should be seen not only as providing for an immediate improvement in the amount of Scots broadcast, but as setting the ground for this further development.

Key Recommendation

- a. Broadcasting organisations have to be made aware that given all the developments in lesser-used languages throughout Europe, negative attitudes towards Scots are no longer tenable, and that they must be seen to be active in promoting the mother tongue of a large proportion of the Scottish population. Scots is recognised as a language by the Scottish, European and UK governments and is seen by the Scottish people themselves as a major badge of their identity: it should therefore have a regular, prominent and permanent place in both local and national broadcasting schedules..**
- b. The Scottish Government should advise all media organisations that both the Scottish and the U.K. Governments are committed, through the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, to the support and development of Scots.
- c. In furtherance of this, the Government should encourage such organisations to recognise Scots as a language widely used throughout Scotland, and work with them, especially those delivering radio and television programmes, to extend the range and quality of their Scots output, and to celebrate the diversity of spoken Scots and its rich literary history.
- d. To facilitate this and to begin to redress the balance in favour of Scots, media organisations should establish forthwith a policy of clear and active encouragement in favour of Scots. Interviewers talking to Scots speakers should use Scots themselves, to encourage the interviewees to respond in the mither tongue.
- e. To enable this, knowledge of spoken Scots should be regarded as an important qualification when producers and presenters are chosen..
- f. To raise awareness and encourage understanding of Scots, broadcasters should prioritise programmes exploring the history of the language and its literature as part of the regular output.
- g. BBC Scotland should appoint an adviser on Scots in order to raise the profile and status of Scots within the BBC. Other media organisations should have access to a similar level of Scots expertise and consultancy through existing agencies.
- h. Local radio and community radio should be encouraged and supported in the very important role they play in raising the profile and status of dialect speech.

4. Literature and the Arts

The centuries-old and still growing body of literature in Scots is an invaluable part of our national heritage, and one of the strongest reasons for ensuring that the language remains

healthy. As the body established by Parliament to foster and support Scotland's culture, Creative Scotland has a specific responsibility towards the care and custody of the Scots language; and its duty to give it practical support and encouragement must be emphasised.

Key Recommendation

- a. **Creative Scotland should be charged with an explicit responsibility to ensure that Scots is fairly, consistently and positively supported in all areas of its funding of the arts, in particular in its funding of literature, writers and publishing. In order to achieve this, Creative Scotland should work towards adopting a comprehensive and consistent Scots language policy as it has done for Gaelic.**
- b. Creative Scotland should create a specific, ring-fenced fund to support the publication of books, magazines, popular and academic publications and other resources in Scots suitable for all ages. This fund would be administered by a body similar to, and possibly modelled on, Comhairle nan Leabhraichean (the Gaelic Books Council) and have a similar remit and degree of independent decision-making power, while remaining financially and operationally accountable to the Scottish Government.
- c. The Scottish Government should consider hosting, and funding, a national Scots Sreivar, who should be a senior poet, author or playwright with a critically-acclaimed body of work.
- d. The National Theatre of Scotland should commission contemporary work by living Scottish playwrights in all three indigenous languages of Scotland. There should also be a strong classic revivalist strand in its programmes.

5. International Contacts

The Scottish Government's efforts to raise Scotland's profile on the international scene have been widely recognised and applauded; and the raising of international awareness and understanding of Scotland's distinctive linguistic situation should be seen as an integral part of this. In the academic field, efforts are already being made to develop a network of international contacts among scholars with interest in Scottish literature and language: the Government should support these efforts and ensure that they are complemented with the development of international links in other fields.

Tourism

Key Recommendation

- a. **Scotland should be presented internationally as a trilingual country, with Scots and Gaelic listed as official languages alongside English.**
- b. VisitScotland should actively promote the Scots language, not only by advertising cultural events with a Scots dimension but by making Scots visible on its website. The promotion of Scots in Washington DC at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and the Library of Congress Burns Symposium are a perfect example of what can be achieved.

- c. Scots should be represented at home and abroad at international events: not only those specifically focusing on literature or the arts but sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games, business and commercial ventures, etc.

Academic

- d. The Scottish Funding Council and Scottish Universities have a clear responsibility to ensure that sufficient funding is directed to the various academic and other bodies concerned to ensure that overseas scholars and laypeople with an interest in Scots can continue to find, not only information and resources, but active assistance by experienced and enthusiastic Scottish scholars and language activists.
- e. The Scottish Funding Council should contribute to the place of Scots as an international field of study by establishing academic exchange programmes between overseas Universities and their Scottish counterparts: this initiative could be taken in partnership with Creative Scotland and with established international scholarly organisations such as the Fulbright Commission.

6. Public Awareness

As already noted, a serious handicap to the development of Scots is the widespread uncertainty, even among fluent speakers, of the actual nature and status of the language; and a key factor in the task of promoting the language is that of eradicating the deep-rooted effects of the old educational tradition of denigrating it as “slang”, —baɔEnglish” or the like. The following recommendations are aimed at achieving this.

Key Recommendation

- a. **The possibility of establishing ‘Scots touns’, ‘dialect conservation areas’ or ‘sites of special linguistic interest’ in areas with high concentrations of speakers should be investigated. A possible approach would be the awarding by a national body of the designation ‘Scots toun’ as an accolade for local work done to promote the Scots language.**
- b. The Scottish Government and other national bodies should draw lessons from the use of Scots at the National Trust for Scotland’s new Robert Burns Birthplace Museum with a view to promoting the use of Scots for signage, labelling and publicity in museums, libraries, historic and all other public buildings.
- c. Local and national agencies should be encouraged to develop language tourism strategies.
- d. Every opportunity should be taken to encourage the audible and visible presence of Scots in public spaces, for example in recorded or live public announcements, and signs displaying the names of towns, villages and streets .

7. Dialects

Scots as a spoken language exists in a number of distinct forms, each of which is strongly identified with a particular area and several of which have been developed for flourishing traditions of local literature. The need to preserve the individual dialects and respect their distinctive identities, while at the same time developing the language as a whole, will require careful planning: in particular, the necessity of developing a standard form of Scots for official purposes must be presented so as to avoid any appearance of a threat to the dialects.

Key Recommendation

- a. **All regional and social dialects of Scots should be recognised as worthy of respect. Central initiatives in support of Scots must therefore be designed to take account of how they will operate in strong dialect areas.**
- b. Local authorities should have not only a clear policy on Scots but a clear awareness of the dialects in their particular areas, and should tailor the application of the national policy to their own particular context.
- c. Successful local initiatives such as Shetland ForWirlds, the Doric Festival in the North-East and the Lapraik Festival in Muirkirk should be actively encouraged and supported by the Government, and monitored for ideas on how similar projects could be initiated in other areas.

8. *The Census*

The present General Register of Scotland decision, approved by the Scottish Parliament, to include a question on Scots in the forthcoming Census is a major step forward.

Key Recommendation

- a. **Efforts must be made to ensure that in preparation for the census the public is made aware of the meaning and implications of the questions. The Scottish Government should support the efforts of GROS and the Scots Language Centre to raise awareness of the Scots language question in the 2011 census.**
- b. Once the results have been examined, a clear strategy of how to use the information should be put in place.

3. Discussions of the Working Group.

This section contains summaries of points arising in the course of the discussions. The grounds for the recommendations presented in the preceding section are set out in more detail here.

Education.

Summary of discussions.

The many-faceted topic of education was discussed at several meetings. Aspects requiring to be examined were identified at the first meeting as including

- (a) the need to make speakers aware of both their own and other dialects;
- (b) the need for adult as well as pre-school, school and student speakers to be provided for in educational practice;
- (c) the need to provide for speakers with learning difficulties;
- (d) the lack of a generally-understood relationship between spoken and written Scots.

From information provided by members, it emerged that the profile of the Scots language in education has never been higher. More teachers than ever are committed to the view that Scots plays a crucial role for many pupils in raising levels of attainment and confidence, improving behaviour and literacy skills and supporting social inclusion and Scottish identity. However, due to the traditional and still deep-seated prejudice against the language and the historically inadequate resourcing of it, only a small number of children in Scotland are currently benefiting from high quality Scots language teaching and from the many examples of good practice which are in evidence across the profession. Furthermore, though numerous individual examples can be found of good practice at all educational levels in providing for Scots, the overall picture is of sporadic and piecemeal efforts, hampered by an excessive dependence on individual initiatives and an almost complete lack of coordination or official guidelines. The suggestion of a network of Scots co-ordinators for the various regions was seen as a step towards resolving this.

The common argument that it would be difficult to find room for Scots in an already crowded curriculum was recognised as fallacious, since Scots is not only a subject for study (though it *is* this and should have a place as such) but the normal spoken tongue of many people and the speech in which many nursery, primary and secondary school pupils conduct their regular activities. It was suggested that this pervasive lack, among teachers and the general public, of a clear understanding of Scots or the issues surrounding it — a fundamental problem in improving the status of the language — could be addressed by ensuring that the language and the learning opportunities it offers become an integral part of all teacher-training courses given in Scotland.

From the outset the success of Shetland was recognised as a source of possible guidelines for the rest of the country. Elements contributing to this success included regular consultations between teachers and local authority representatives on what resources are required, active participation by teachers in the task of preparing resources which are user-friendly and meet the requirements of the curriculum, and the obtaining of a graduate placement post with the remit of producing the finished materials for pre-school teaching and lower primary classes. (This post has now grown into a three-year post with a wider remit.)

The importance of the internet as a teaching tool was recognised. Discussion of a picture dictionary of Scots as a means of introducing young children to the language was complemented by discussion of whether a web-based resource might be even more useful, as being cheaper to produce, more easily accessible, easier and quicker to update and more capable of allowing for inclusion of different dialects. The fact that LTS has commissioned a module on Scots, about which all teachers will be informed, was noted with approval: so

likewise was the Engage for Education website, recently launched by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning earlier this year, on which a workshop on Scots language may be posted.

An issue in which educational provision has some part is the link between Scots speech and social inclusion: the well-remembered stigmatising of all forms of Scots in the classroom is much reduced, but prejudices remain. It was suggested that a research project on social attitudes to Scots could be commissioned.

The undoubted progress which has been made over the last ten years in strengthening the place of Scots in the educational system makes it particularly urgent that this momentum should be maintained. A recent critical lack of positive action for Scots in education threatens to undermine the recent advances. The increased level among the teaching profession of skill and experience in teaching Scots is a major asset to Scotland's education system, but will disappear if not supported now by government. And there is increasing dissatisfaction among teaching professionals that while there are financial plans in place for the other languages of Scotland, the government has made no provision for the future funding of Scots in schools. Only delivery of meaningful and sustainable learning opportunities will bring to an end the generations of neglect of the Scots language in education. The Scottish Government must act to restore to hundreds of thousands of young Scots the fundamental human right of children to be taught in their mother tongue.

Broadcasting

Summary of discussions.

Questions relating to the use of Scots in broadcasting and the media were discussed at the third and fourth meetings of the group. The Group recognised that the reservation of broadcasting to the Westminster Government by the terms of the Scotland Act (1998) would be an obstacle to implementing any changes; but several matters require to be urgently addressed.

Three items were identified as central to the discussion: the need for more funding in Scottish media, the lack of effort put into developing programmes either in Scots or about the Scots language, and the cultural implications of the lack of Scots within Scottish broadcasting.

It was strongly felt by the Group that the Scottish broadcasting media should promote a climate where Scots is encouraged, particularly in instances where members of the public take part in broadcasts: a case in point is interviews for news programmes. One suggestion was that the BBC and other broadcasting stations should be encouraged to make a variety of programmes in Scots to reflect the cultural diversity within the nation, including (for example) the commissioning of new plays for radio and television; another was the introduction of quotas by BBC Scotland for the use of Scots in their programming. The group also believed that BBC Scotland should have an officer with a full time remit on Scots as BBC Ulster has for Ulster Scots. The full time employment of a Scots correspondent (or preferably a group of them) was mentioned as a recommendation.

As in education, the importance of the internet and its potential as a vehicle for promoting Scots was recognised in the Group's discussions of broadcasting and the media. It was suggested that all major Scottish institutions could be approached with a view to having Scots content on their websites. There should also be funding for a major Scots website using existing audio and video resources and providing links to media archives, and including samples of Scots from all periods of its history and reflecting all its range of uses (song, comedy, drama and other literary forms, etc.). The website of the Scots Language Centre, already recognised internationally as an excellent resource, could form the foundation for this project."

Many ideas were proposed as recommendations in addition to the ones listed: some, after discussion, were seen as being too specific in proposing a proportional relationship between the number of Scots speakers and the amount of broadcasting time devoted to Scots, since the Group cannot prescribe quotas. However, the field of broadcasting was seen as an area where the provision for Scots is particularly far from adequate, and where several immediate steps to improve it can realistically be advised.

Literature and the Arts

Summary of discussions.

The topic of publishing was examined at the fourth meeting of the Group. The strong and enduring association of Scots with literature was recognised, and seen as one of the essential arguments for determined Governmental policy in support of the language.

In view of the positive attitude of the Scottish Arts Council's Literature Department towards Scots writing, which has always been a valuable asset, the possibility of a dedicated fund to subsidise publishing in Scots was seen as realistic and deserving of investigation. This would provide incentive for publishers to publish new Scots literature. The success of the Gaelic Books Council was noted, and the possibility of a similar body to fund publishing in Scots was seen as a useful aim to which the SAC's successor, Creative Scotland, should give serious consideration.

A common perception that Scots is —difficult” to read was seen as an obstacle to developing an extensive Scots publishing industry. One way of countering this could be to produce audio books, accompanied by new printed editions, of classic Scots texts. By allowing readers to hear the pronunciation and see the written form at the same time, this would help them to associate the Scots of written texts with the familiar spoken language, thus making for a clearer understanding of and a better-informed attitude to the Scots tongue.

Although the need to expand into other markets besides the educational field was recognised, the successful link between Scots publishing and education developed by Itchy Coo was seen as an achievement that could be built on. Itchy Coo's greatest success has been with books for primary-school age children; but it is essential to encourage children to maintain their habit of reading Scots into the secondary and tertiary education periods and beyond. An obligatory Scots element in the Highers would give publishers the opportunity to produce books aimed at this age group.

What could prove a major setback to Scots publishing was the SAC's decision to withdraw funding from *Lallans* magazine, one of the longest-running and most important outlets for Scots writing: this matter arose during the weeks when the Group was discussing the issue of publishing, and received urgent attention. Subsequent contact between Creative Scotland and members of the Group have resulted in assurances that this does not imply any diminution of Creative Scotland's support for Scots, and that alternatives to continuing *Lallans* in its present form, such as replacing it with an online magazine, will be actively sought.

The topic of creative writing was discussed at the fourth meeting of the Group. The principles set out in the discussion paper were unanimously endorsed, and the need to create an ambience more favourable to the production of creative writing in Scots, in all literary genres, was seen as of vital importance for the health of the language. The integral connection between encouraging creative writing and fostering literacy in Scots and a general understanding of the language and its identity, and as a corollary the close link between the fields of creative writing and education, was noted: it was agreed that while guaranteed practical support for literature, in the shape of bursaries and grants for writers and sponsorship of literary projects by central and local government, was essential, it could only have a lasting effect in the context of an educational programme aimed at raising the general level of literacy in Scots.

A key factor, emphasised both in the paper and in the ensuing discussions, is the lack of financial support for writers in Scotland, particularly those writing in Scots, because of the perceived lack of a market for their work. The self-perpetuating vicious circle — nobody buys Scots books because nobody publishes them; nobody publishes them because nobody buys them — could be broken by a determined programme of subsidising and publishing

good-quality Scots works, co-ordinated with a programme of raising the status of Scots in the educational system. The Itchy Coo project is a model example of how this kind of co-ordinated programme can be achieved, and its success provides a template for future Scots publishing ventures.

The specific part to be played by Creative Scotland was examined, and the need for this body not only to give support to individual authors for one-off projects but to subsidise the advertising and marketing of Scots books was endorsed. The importance of literary magazines such as *Lallans* was emphasised: such magazines, though in many cases ephemeral, play an essential part in providing outlets for Scots writing; and should be more consistently and determinedly supported. Another important institution deserving of guaranteed support through both more secure financing and more high-profile publicity is the Scottish Poetry Library.

The National Theatre of Scotland was the subject of some discussion: though the radical, adventurous and highly stimulating nature of many of its productions was seen as a matter for applause, and likewise the use of actors with strongly Scottish voices, it was considered that its lack of initiative in either producing much new work or revivals of good-quality plays in Scots was in part a failure of its remit as a *national* theatre. Scottish Screen was likewise seen as an artistic body whose use of Scots could be substantially increased.

International Contacts

Summary of discussions.

This topic was discussed at the fifth meeting of the group. Since the discussion paper had focused mostly on the Scots international presence in the academic and creative writing fields, in which the success of recent efforts to raise the international profile of Scots were unquestioned, much of the discussion centred on what could be done to promote Scots internationally on a popular level.

Given the overall success of the Homecoming Scotland project of 2009, the lack of a strong emphasis on Scots in the many international events associated with this was seen as an opportunity lost. Plans for similar events, such as the one currently under discussion to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn in 2014, should be framed to allow for a much greater degree of promoting and displaying the Scots language.

Tourism was also seen as a means of promoting Scots abroad. The language itself could be advertised as a tourist attraction along with other aspects of the nation's cultural heritage: countries with strong historical links to Scotland might be highly responsive to this. VisitScotland could play a key role in promoting Scots internationally by this means.

Another possible opportunity is the Commonwealth Games, which will bring large numbers of international visitors to Scotland. Introductions to the language, and in particular to the dialects of Glasgow, could be offered to visitors, both on arrival and via the internet.

In general, in view of the determined efforts of the Scottish Government to promote Scotland on the international stage and to ensure that the country plays a full part in both hosting international events and taking part in ones held in other countries, it was recognised that there are enormous opportunities for enhancing the international awareness of Scots. VisitScotland and other cultural bodies could have a key role in this, and should be actively encouraged to develop it.

Public awareness.

Summary of discussions.

The theme of public awareness of Scots had surfaced, with one application or another, at all the meetings; but the one devoted specifically to a discussion of it was the sixth.

Several previous discussions had focused on the need for a body to exist for the support and promotion of Scots as Bòrd na Gàidhlig does for Gaelic, and receiving a comparable amount of recognition, attention, publicity and funding; but the general feeling of the Group was that the setting up of an entirely new body would be unrealistic at this time. Meanwhile, much of the co-ordination and publicity is carried out the by Scots Language Centre. The possibility of a part time press and communications officer being appointed as a permanent member of the SLC staff was seen as desirable: this would require funding. Funding should also be provided for existing Scots agencies to enable them to lobby and raise awareness more effectively.

The unsatisfactory level of public awareness on Scots, in spite of all the valuable work being done, was seen as being partly due to the lack of any consistent and strongly-emphasised policy on Scots on the part of public bodies such as VisitScotland, Creative Scotland and other bodies which receive public funding. It was considered that determined action should be taken by the Government to ensure that all such bodies institute policies on Scots and put them into practice. The Government too should have such a policy in place in accordance with its commitments under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Dialects

Summary of discussions.

The issue of dialects too was one which arose during the Group's discussions of all other topics: necessarily, since the long-term socio-historical development of Scots has given it, at present, a distinctive nature as a *language* with a number of different *dialects* but — at present — no *standard* form. Much of the widespread ignorance and confusion surrounding Scots, already often referred to, inheres in a failure to understand that the term —Scot' includes Buchan, Border, Fife, Ayrshire, Galloway, Shetland and all other dialects, and that there is no form (or certainly, at least, no *spoken* form) which can be taken to be simply —Scot' (as, for example, what is commonly and naively taken to be simply —Franch'' is the Île de France dialect spoken with an educated middle-class Parisian accent). This situation is by no means unique to Scots and is well understood by sociolinguists: also well recognised is the fact that a standard form to be used for governmental and other official purposes could readily be devised, and would be if a government directive to this effect were issued. Another common source of confusion is a value-based distinction between urban and rural dialects.. Since a clear understanding of this situation requires some comprehension of fairly sophisticated sociolinguistic concepts, the discussion must return to the need for an educational policy which will instil a better understanding not only of Scots but of language in general.

Though it goes without saying that the central government and all public bodies should treat Scots dialects with respect, a major responsibility lies with local authorities to apply Government policy in their own dialect areas, and to take a proactive approach in encouraging the local speech. There might be a designated official in each relevant local authority whose remit is to promote the Scots of the area, and who receives funding specifically for this purpose; and these officials should consult and collaborate with each other and with their counterpart in the central government.

The existence of striking differences between local dialects should be seen, not as a handicap to development, but as a positive source of strength. Children in schools could be taught about the distinctive features of their own local dialect and how they compare and contrast with those of other areas. As different dialects are broadcast on national and local radio and on television, they could be encouraged to look for the differences and discuss them in class. The long-term result of this would be to increase the general level of respect and understanding of different dialects all over the country, and to enable Scots-speakers to appreciate the essential fact that, divergent though the dialects are, they are nonetheless forms of the same Scots language.

The Census

Though not at first designated as a specific subject for discussion by the Group, it was felt that in view of the fact that the welcome decision had been taken to include a question on Scots in the 2011 census, the Group's collective thoughts on this might be useful to the Government both in devising the question and in utilising the information which it will give.

Summary of discussions.

It was noted with satisfaction that though the proposal for a Scots question in the 2001 Census had been rejected by the then-existing Scottish Parliament, this time no MSP had voted against the inclusion of Scots in the census. The Group learned that most questions contained within the census have been developed for public bodies and government departments so they can gain information to help them identify a need for services. The basic information required for Scots is on how many people can speak, read and understand it; and the guidance material is intended to clarify this for the lay citizen, including the issue of dialects.

The suggestion was made that the planned inclusion of a Scots question should be well publicised in advance of the Census. The SLC and GROS will be raising awareness of this, hopefully funded in their efforts by the Minister for Energy, Enterprise and Tourism; all publicly funded and voluntary Scots language organisations should be encouraged to participate in, and use their networks to promote the awareness raising; and individual Group members (and others) could also help by such methods as writing letters to newspapers.

Since the inclusion of a Scots question has been decided, the Group's response when making its recommendations should focus on the issue of how to utilise the data. The General Register Office should be requested to provide a breakdown by area/age etc to help inform policy development. Many of the recommendations made by the Group in other fields will be greatly facilitated by a careful application of the data gathered.

4. Miscellaneous activities of the Working Group.

Besides discussion of the set topics utilising discussion papers provided by Group members, some of the meetings also included time devoted to specific projects or pieces of information received.

Meeting 2: 12-1-10.

Presentation by the Chair of the Traditional Arts Working Group

Dave Francis kindly agreed to offer his advice to the Scots working group based on his experience as a member of the Traditional Arts Working Group. Traditional Arts in Scotland enjoy a good position culturally, which contrasts somewhat with that of the Scots Language at this present time. The main focus of the Traditional Arts Working Group is on the following themes:

- Performance
- Cultural memory
- Transmission (teaching and learning)
- Support and development

The Traditional Arts Working Group has contributions from invited guests and holds public meetings all over Scotland. The public meetings, which gathered together many groups in the arts field, have highlighted a fundamental weakness in provision for the arts in Scotland, namely that many groups were unaware of the work other groups were doing: a fact which members of the Scots group at once recognised as familiar in their own field. The place of traditional arts in the educational field was also recognised, from Mr Francis' presentation, as being similar to that of Scots: both subjects have to struggle for a recognised place in the curriculum; and the place they have is often conditioned to an excessive extent by the enthusiasms of individual teachers, making it difficult to introduce subjects like traditional arts and the Scots language and guarantee them a place.

Presentation on Research on Public Attitudes to Scots – TNS-BMRB Researchers

Catriona West gave a short presentation on the findings of recent research carried out into Public Attitudes to Scots. Copies were provided to the working group members. The presentation covered the background, objectives and methodology used in the research. In response to a question from the group as to how the researchers explained what was meant by Scots, she explained that respondents were played a tape of people speaking simple Scots phrases. She covered the key findings: Scots is widely spoken, most commonly with family and friends, though less commonly read or written; there are no strong negative feelings against Scots; there are mixed perceptions of Scots as a language though these are generally positive; there is widespread recognition of the role of Scots in history, culture and identity; many consider that the use of Scots nowadays is important, most particularly in culture; many are content with the amount of Scots used but significant minorities are in favour of more; views relating to learning Scots were generally positive but there was less of a consensus on its role in education, parents with children under 5 in particular showing significant opposition to encouraging children to speak Scots. Members were impressed with this piece of work and felt that it would be useful in promoting Scots. They were encouraged by the findings and said that it was to the credit of the Scottish Government that the research had been commissioned.

Meeting 5: 19-5-10.

Presentation on the National Trust for Scotland's new Robert Burns Birthplace Museum by Nat Edwards and Mary Hudson

NTS recognises the importance of supporting Scotland's languages as well as artefacts and built heritage. The Gaelic Language Plan which it is currently preparing is part of this, and the new Burns museum, due to open in November 2010, will likewise give a boost to the status of Scots. In most museums in Scotland, Scots is usually confined to menus or the vernacular such as children's games or agriculture. The NTS team felt that it would be an injustice to the Robert Burns legacy not to use Scots within this museum. Careful research and planning, including consultation on the use of Scots in other museums and displays in properties of SAC and Historic Scotland, and the likely public reaction to a more extensive presence for it in the Burns Birthplace Museum, have been conducted to find the best way of implementing this while ensuring that the Museum displays are accessible to all visitors.

The approach will be that there will be a combination of English and Scots with the top level message in Scots. James Robertson is working with NTS advising on Scots terminology. The guide book has been written in English but no strategy is yet in place regarding brochures and leaflets. Education packs in Scots will also be available. The NTS vision for the museum is that:

- The museum should be a leading resource for out of school learning in Scots.
- Every Scots speaker who visits the museum will leave with a pride in the richness of their heritage.
- Non-Scots speakers should leave with a curiosity about Scots and a few more words to add to the richness of their own vocabulary.

The Group members were greatly impressed by this project, and the Group's good wishes for its success were offered to the presenters. This was seen as a model project the success of which should be carefully monitored, with a view to possibly applying the approach of the Burns Birthplace Museum in other comparable exhibits.

Meeting 6: 22-6-10

Presentation on the Lapraik Festival in Muirkirk by J. Derrick McClure.

Paper written for the Muirkirk Enterprise Group and circulated also to the MWG

Visit of the Ministerial Advisory Group on Scots to the Lapraik Festival, Muirkirk: 4th June 2010.

In response to an invitation kindly extended by Mr Jim Currie on behalf of Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG), three members of the Ministerial Advisory Group: J. Derrick McClure (Chairman of the Group), Michael Hance (Director of the Scots Language Centre) and Janet Paisley (novelist and poet): visited Muirkirk on June 4th 2010. Accompanying the Group representatives were Dauvit Horsbroch and Chris Third, members of the staff of the Scots Language Centre.

The visitors were warmly welcomed at Muirkirk Primary School, and shown an exhibition of models and writings on Muirkirk and its setting made by the school pupils. One wall of the exhibition room was decorated with Scots words written by the pupils in colourful letters. Mr Currie and other members of MEG informed the visitors, in talks illustrated with PowerPoint displays, about the regeneration of Muirkirk which is being accomplished by local initiative, and in particular about the Lapraik Festival, now in its third year, which is a centrepiece of the efforts being made to restore the confidence and prosperity of the

community. The visitors were also taken to see a classroom project in action: a group of children being introduced to Scots words, music and songs by two expert researchers and performers, John Morran and Fred Freeman.

At a previously-advertised public meeting attended by local people including some of the teachers at the Primary School, plans to promote Muirkirk as the first Scots Toun and the general importance of the Scots language at local and national level were discussed, and the possible part which the Ministerial Advisory Group could play was examined. It was explained that the Group itself cannot guarantee funding or any other form of governmental support for the Lapraik Festival: the function of the Group is to offer recommendations to the Government on general issues relating to its declared policy of acting in support of Scots, these recommendations will be presented in a single report to the Government in October of this year, and the Government will then plan its actions taking the Group's recommendations into account. However, the Group can, and certainly will, mention the Lapraik Festival and its success in promoting Scots in Muirkirk as a highly interesting and praiseworthy venture, and recommend it for the favourable attention of the Government.

After the meeting, the visitors were taken round part of the new Audio Trail connecting Muirkirk's many sites of historical and literary interest; and though the other representatives of the Ministerial Advisory Group and the Scots Language Centre were unable to remain beyond the afternoon, Mr McClure attended, with great enjoyment, the Crambo Jingle in the evening and the school's poetry competition the following forenoon.

Through the Lapraik Festival and other projects, MEG has clearly been exceptionally successful in restoring the confidence of the Muirkirk community; and the integral part played in this by the Scots tongue was noted with admiration. The Ministerial Advisory Group will take due note.

J. Derrick McClure,
Chairman.

The Group members who had taken part in this event attended felt that the visit was a very positive one and were pleased to see that the Scots tongue is being used in Muirkirk as a central element in its programme for civic regeneration. The Group was especially interested in Muirkirk's plans to promote itself as the first "Scots Toun". The possibility was discussed of the status of "Scots Toun" being awarded by the Government as an accolade to communities which have achieved distinction in efforts to promote Scots locally, and agreed that this would be put forward as a recommendation. Such an award could raise the status of Scots and create an explicit link between promotion of the language and economic regeneration, and could eventually lead to a network of "Scots Touns".

Meeting 6: 22-6-10

Discussion of paper submitted by Mr Kenneth Fraser.

Mr Fraser, a librarian at St Andrews with a long-term commitment to the cause of Scots, had on his own initiative submitted two lengthy and detailed papers for the Group's attention. Because of their wide range and because most of the material which they contained related to issues on the Group's specific remit, they provided valuable input for the Group's discussions; and the papers have been filed with those submitted by members of the Group.

APPENDIX 1

The Working Group

Alasdair Allan MSP

John Corbett

Matthew Fitt

Michael Hance

Laureen Johnson

Billy Kay

J. Derrick McClure, Chair

Janet Paisley

James Robertson

Chris Robinson

Cllr Sandy Stronach

Rab Wilson

Secretariat

Douglas Ansdell, Scottish Government

Janet MacMillan, Scottish Government

APPENDIX 2

Working Group Meetings

24 November 2009 - First Meeting

Mike Russell, MSP, Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution

12 January 2010 - Second Meeting

Dave Francis, Chair of the Traditional Arts Working Group

Catriona West, TNS-BMRB Researchers – Research on Public Attitudes to the Scots
Language

24 February 2010 - Third Meeting

Business Structuring

Education

Broadcasting and the Media

7 April 2010 - Fourth Meeting

Report Template

Education

Broadcasting

Publishing

Creative Writing

19 May 2010 - Fifth Meeting

Presentation by Nat Edwards and Mary Hudson of the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum

International Contacts

Census

22 June 2010 - Sixth Meeting

Dialects

Public Relations/ Public Awareness/ Advocacy

Legislation

18 August 2010 - Seventh Meeting

Recommendations

Draft Report

29 September 2010 - Eighth Meeting

Revise Recommendations and Draft Report

27 October 2010 – Final Meeting

Finalise Report

APPENDIX 3

ITCHY COO

Itchy Coo will cease its education and outreach programme in March 2011 and its publications list will be sustained but not further developed beyond the end of 2011.



Itchy Coo has been making ‘braw books for bairns o aw ages’ since 2002. Its co-founders, Matthew Fitt and James Robertson, started with the aim of extending the provision of children’s literature in Scots. In February 2010, they published **Precious and the Puggies** by Alexander McCall Smith, the imprint’s 34th title.

Together with publishing partner, Black & White, and with funding from the Scottish Arts Council, Itchy Coo has become the leading publisher of children’s books in Scots, selling a quarter of a million books and picking up major awards along the way.

Resources for primary school readers include a counting book **A Moose in the Hoose**, **Eck the Bee** packed with language activities to keep young minds busy and **A Wee Book o Fairy Tales** which was transformed into a successful touring stage play by the TAG Citizens’ Theatre in 2008.

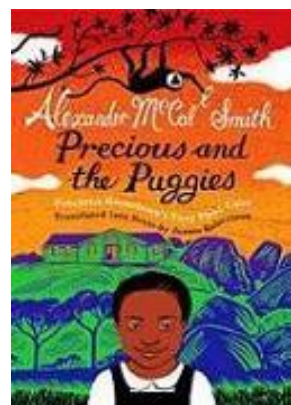
Itchy Coo has produced some very well received translations into Scots of texts by Roald Dahl, AA Milne and RL Stevenson. **The Eejits** and **Geordie’s Mingin Medicine** even managed to dislodge Harry Potter and High School Musical from the Number 1 spot in the bestseller charts.

Plays, short stories, novellas, non-fiction and a major Scots anthology make up the provision for secondary and senior level. The short dramas in **Tam o Shanter’s Big Night Oot** have been performed by high schools all over the country and **A Scots Parliament** remains the only school text book on the history of democracy in Scotland.

As well as book production, Itchy Coo has visited over 1000 schools and delivered 500 in-service training sessions in almost every local authority through its Education and Outreach programme. Itchy Coo has worked with thousands of young people and given hundreds of staff across Scotland the confidence to incorporate Scots as an integral part of their teaching practice.

The Itchy Coo project has been the main driver of change for Scots since 2002 and has brought about a huge shift in attitudes towards the language in education.

For more information, visit: www.itchy-coo.com



APPENDIX 4

Extracts: Scots CPG Education Sub-Committee's Survey of Teacher Attitudes to Scots

Survey sample: 200 teachers. Final report due: Nov 30. More at www.scotsinschools.com

8. What support / training would help teachers to become more confident in delivering Scots language in schools?

- More CPD and a resource online to share ideas and materials.
- Courses provided as with any other curricular area/Money for resources/List of resources that can be used. Scots shouldn't be seen as 'slang' or 'lazy'
- An awareness of the resources out there to teach Scots. More CPD opportunities for all staff./If teachers realised how enjoyable the children find lessons in Scots they would be proactive here.
- Bank of teaching materials. Officially stated support for Scots. Funding for a Champion in schools, Clusters or Local Authorities. CPD structured for teachers and classroom assistants. Materials/support/workshops for parents. Resources that support the teaching of new vocabulary.
- Lots of scope for learning poetry and reciting it but it's one thing reading someone else's work and another writing your own so some support for children to become confident in creating their own texts would be great. Dual language books to teach Scots and English alongside each other.

9. Please note below any further points that you may have regarding your views on the place of the Scots language in Curriculum for Excellence.

- THE CHILDREN ARE ENERGIZED AND MOTIVATED WHEN USING SCOTS LANGUAGE
- Scots language lends itself to many of the CfE language & literacy outcomes and the four capacities, promoting positive image of "home language" and encouraging acceptance and tolerance of differences.
- I think the teaching of Scots enriches the vocabulary of our pupils. It helps focus on the use of language and will support and develop the oral curriculum. It lends itself well to an 'active' curriculum and learning and teaching
- It brings a vibrancy and excitement to language. Engages and motivates particular children, especially in written language. Has a generational impact especially for those children with Scots grandparents. Many children for whom English is not their first language, love reciting Scots poetry.



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