

<b>Institution:</b> University of Glasgow (UofG)		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 26B Modern Languages and Linguistics (Celtic and Gaelic)		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Glaschu: Using research to transform Glasgow's relationship with the Gaelic language, enriching cultural and artistic use through partnership with local government		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2007–2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Michel Byrne	Lecturer in Celtic & Gaelic	1997–present
Katherine Forsyth	Professor of Celtic Studies	1999–present
Sheila Kidd	Senior Lecturer in Celtic & Gaelic	1996–present
Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh	Professor of Gaelic/VP Head of College	2005–present
Aonghas MacCoinnich	Lecturer in Celtic & Gaelic	2013–present
Simon Taylor	Reader in Celtic & Gaelic	2011–present
Alasdair Whyte	Research Fellow in Celtic Onomastics	2012–present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2017–31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>A long-standing belief in Glasgow that Gaelic 'was never spoken here' has been debunked by UofG research into the city's placenames, establishing Glasgow's deep, centuries-old connection with Gaelic. The research led to an increased range of opportunities for using Gaelic, a joint aim with strategic partner Glasgow City Council, as well as improving learning material and stimulating cultural and artistic outputs. Through research-based contributions to a bilingual website, an exhibition, a library portal for Gaelic-language resources, and a programme of activities including renowned Scottish artists taking place around the Mòd in Glasgow, 2019, the research has improved and increased the sustainability and vitality of Gaelic in Glasgow.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Glasgow's Gaelic nickname, Baile Mòr nan Gàidheal ('City of the Gaels'), aptly conveys the city's importance in the history of Gaelic Scotland. Despite this, comparatively little research had been done on Gaelic Glasgow (other than studies of the social geography of migration), and consideration of the influence of the city upon the Gaels, their literature, and their culture has often been incidental to Gaelic scholarship. Anglophone historical scholarship has tended to overlook the Gaelic dimension to urban Scottish history and Glasgow's English- and Gaelic-speakers alike have often been oblivious to the Gaelic identity and/or background of key figures in the city's history.</p> <p>To address this, and to mark the centenary of Celtic and Gaelic as a subject of study within the university, UofG staff organized a conference in 2001: 'Glasgow Baile Mòr nan Gàidheal, City of the Gaels'. Several of the conference papers, together with others added later, were collected in [3.2], edited by Sheila Kidd. This 2007 volume reframed Glasgow as a stronghold rather than an outpost of Gaelic, demonstrating the contribution Gaels have made to Glasgow but also how Glasgow's Gaels shaped events in the Highlands and made significant contributions to Gaelic literature and culture, not just since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but from Glasgow's origins.</p> <p>The perception of Gaelic within Glasgow as an immigrant's language was countered by an important article by Simon Taylor on the evidence of Glasgow's place-names, over 90 of which are of Medieval Gaelic origin (confirmed by subsequent research by Alasdair Whyte) [3.1; 3.7]. These demonstrate that the area was predominantly Gaelic-speaking by the later 11th century</p>		

and remained so for some centuries, despite the introduction of Scots with the foundation of the burgh in 1176. Onomastics thus offers an evidence base to refute the common assertion that 'Gaelic was never spoken here', an argument often made by those who oppose public spending on Gaelic, including Gaelic-medium education, in the Lowlands.

Roibeard Ó Maolaláigh, Katherine Forsyth, and Aonghas MacCoinnich further explored this 'hidden' Gaelic history of Glasgow, investigating the largely forgotten experience of Gaelic speakers who studied there between 1451–1901. This research was funded by the UofG, the R.L. Thomson endowment, and Soillse (National Research Network for the Maintenance and Revitalisation of Gaelic Language and Culture). The project's main output to date is the website *Sgeul na Gàidhlig: The Gaelic Story at the University of Glasgow*, researched and created by MacCoinnich and launched December 2014.

Fresh research on Glasgow place-names of Gaelic origin was commissioned by Glasgow Life for their Glaschu website (launched March 2018). Alasdair Whyte was employed to work on this 'Mapping Gaelic Glasgow' project. Under supervision from Forsyth and Taylor he produced 5 short online articles for the Glaschu website, launched March 2018, and an illustrated guidebook to Glasgow's placenames researched by Whyte has been delayed and is now expected in 2021: *Gaelic Spoken Here: A guide to Glasgow's Gaelic Place-names*.

### 3. References to the research

- 3.1 Simon Taylor (2007) 'Gaelic in Glasgow: the onomastic evidence', in Kidd, S.M. (ed.) *Glasgow: Baile Mor Nan Gaidheal: City of the Gaels*. Roinn na Ceiltis, Oilthigh Ghlaschu: Glasgow, pp.1–19. ISBN 9780903204231 <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/6900/> [available on request from HEI]
- 3.2 Sheila Kidd (2007) 'Tormod MacLeòid: Àrd-Chonsal nan Gàidheal? [Norman MacLeod Consul to the Gaels?]', in Kidd, S. M. (ed.) *Glasgow: Baile Mòr nan Gàidheal: City of the Gaels*. Roinn na Ceiltis, Oilthigh Ghlaschu: Glasgow, pp.107–129. <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/43449/> [available on request from HEI]
- 3.3 Michel Byrne (2007), 'Chan e chleachd bhith an cabhsair chlach': Am Bàrd Gàidhlig 's am Baile Mòr bhon 17mh linn chun an 20mh linn', in, S.M. Kidd, ed., *Glasgow. Baile Mòr nan Gàidheal. City of the Gaels*. Roinn na Ceiltis, Oilthigh Ghlaschu:Glasgow, pp.55–82. <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/4598/>
- 3.4 Roibeard Ó Maolaláigh (2007) 'Mac bàillidh hirt, the son of the bailiff of St Kilda on his first visit to Glasgow: an eighteenth-century Gaelic satirical narrative tale from Islay in Gaelic-Scots orthography', in Kidd, S.M. (ed.) *Glasgow: Baile Mor Nan Gaidheal: City of the Gaels*. Roinn na Ceiltis, Oilthigh Ghlaschu: Glasgow, pp 89–106. <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/7465/> [available on request from HEI]
- 3.5 Aonghas MacCoinnich (2014) *The Gaelic Story at the University of Glasgow: The story of Gaels and Gaelic at the University of Glasgow from 1451* Website: <http://sgeulnagaidhlig.ac.uk> (launched December 2014)
- 3.6 Katherine Forsyth (2018) [Glaschu.net](http://glaschu.net) (GlasgowLife website about Glasgow's Gaelic heritage): major editorial input and short online articles on Glasgow's Gaelic heritage.

**Quality:** Many of the outputs are peer-reviewed and the body of work as a whole is expected to meet or exceed the 2\* threshold.

### 4. Details of the impact

Gaelic is a minoritized and threatened language: [recent research](#) revealed that future survival is more precarious than had been thought, concluding that policies focused on language

acquisition are insufficient to halt its rapid decline; it is necessary to support language use, and the arts are a key driver for this. Glasgow hosts institutions important for Gaelic, such as the BBC, as well as the largest concentration of Gaelic speakers outside the Highlands and Islands. As a result, transforming the relationship between city and language through normalizing its use benefits the language's sustainability across Scotland and beyond. This has been done by raising awareness of the forgotten deep history of Gaelic in the city, inspiring artists by providing new understandings, and empowering speakers who often face indifference, or [active hostility](#).

In order to deepen Glasgow's relationship with Gaelic, UofG researchers have formed a close strategic partnership with Glasgow Life (the cultural and leisure services arm of Glasgow City Council), including on delivery of its [Gaelic Arts Strategy](#) 2018–2022. UofG's impact, especially through development of the website [Glaschu.net](#), aligns with Strategic Aim 2: '*...to increase opportunities for all to interact with Gaelic by increasing visibility and deepening the awareness of the cultural, linguistic and historical connections Gaelic has with the city.*' Glasgow Life's Gaelic Arts Producer [5.1] noted that '*Glaschu.net* [3.6] has ... directly delivered aim 2'.

[Glaschu.net](#) showcases findings and imagery from UofG research in four themes: Place, Social, Language, and Work. It was launched in March 2018 to support *Glaschu Gàidhlig*, a three-year Glasgow Life/UofG initiative of cultural and artistic engagement promoting Gaelic language and culture. By November 2020 *Glaschu.net* had almost 14,000 page views by 6,040 unique users (from 100 countries, principally the UK, USA, China, Brazil, Australia, Canada and Germany) [5.2] and as of early 2021 it was still receiving ~1,000 monthly hits [5.1]. Glasgow Life's Gaelic Arts Producer [5.2] stated: '*Glaschu.net and the GU researchers have made a significant contribution to increasing the visibility of Gaelic in Glasgow. In a time when the validity of learning and promoting Gaelic is questioned, Glaschu.net allows us to challenge the false notions that are periodically and incorrectly rehashed in the press.*'

When *Glaschu.net*'s launch was held at [the Mitchell](#), Glasgow's flagship municipal library, it raised awareness among staff about Gaelic-language resources, leading to changes in how they are managed and presented [5.4]. The Mitchell's Principal Librarian said that '*following our introduction to this important resource ... we were inspired to pull together an exhibition ... as well as a dedicated section physically in the library, for the first time bringing together and drawing attention to a range of Gaelic books and other resources we host at the Mitchell*'. They added, '*we also decided to create a new budget item especially for the purchase of new stock of Gaelic books, to ensure we continue to meet the needs of Gaelic speakers in Glasgow*'.

Forsyth and Whyte advised on an exhibition, [GUGA: Slighe Gu Gàidhlig](#) (Exploring Gaelic Identities), at the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow which ran from 11 October 2019–2 February 2020 and attracted 13,062 visitors [5.4]. GUGA explored historical and contemporary relationships of Gaelic culture with Scotland, highlighting Gaelic in Glasgow. At the launch, 93% of those surveyed agreed that this innovative exhibition enhanced visibility of Gaelic in Glasgow [5.5]. The Hunterian's Deputy Director commented that '*new research on the Gaelic origins of Glasgow place names was used very effectively to communicate to The Hunterian's audiences the historic place of the Gaelic language in their immediate localities*'. That the exhibition and launch were in Gaelic with English translations both validated Gaelic's place in Glasgow and was an important innovation. The Deputy Director commented that '*the Hunterian was challenged to experiment with new approaches to interpretation – particularly in the use of Gaelic as the primary language in the exhibition. The success of this will have a direct impact on future exhibition programmes*'.

*Glasgow Gaels*, a further small exhibition using the research, was created by Glasgow City Archives and ran October–December 2019. Glasgow City Archives’ archivist stated that it attracted over 300 visitors and commented that ‘*Glaschu.net* was invaluable when preparing for *Glasgow Gaels*’ [5.6, 5.7].

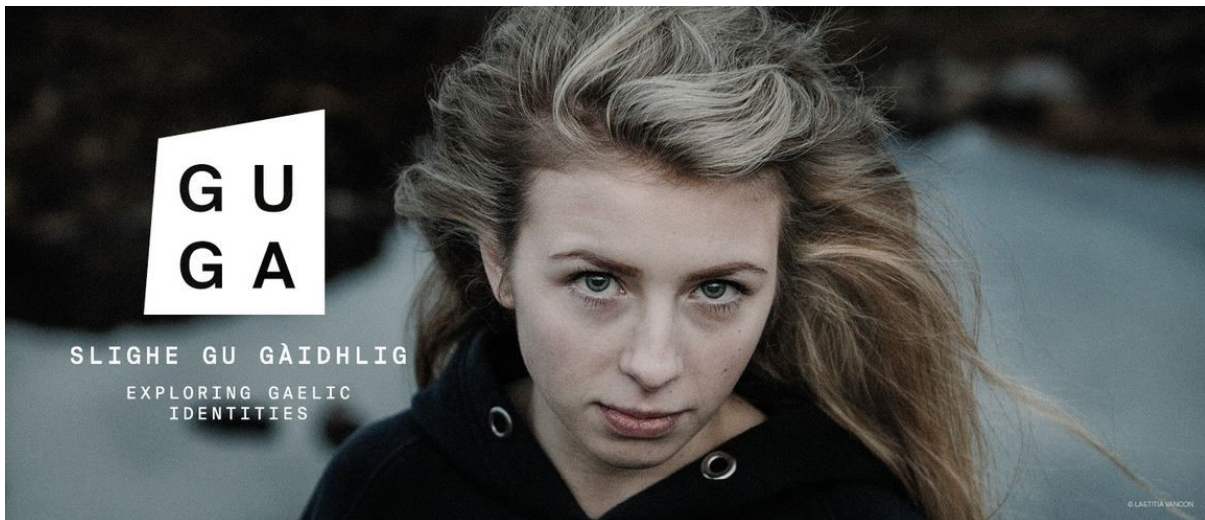


Figure 1: Poster from Hunterian Exhibition Guga: Slighe Gu Gàidhlig (Exploring Gaelic Identities) 11 October 2019 – 2 February 2020

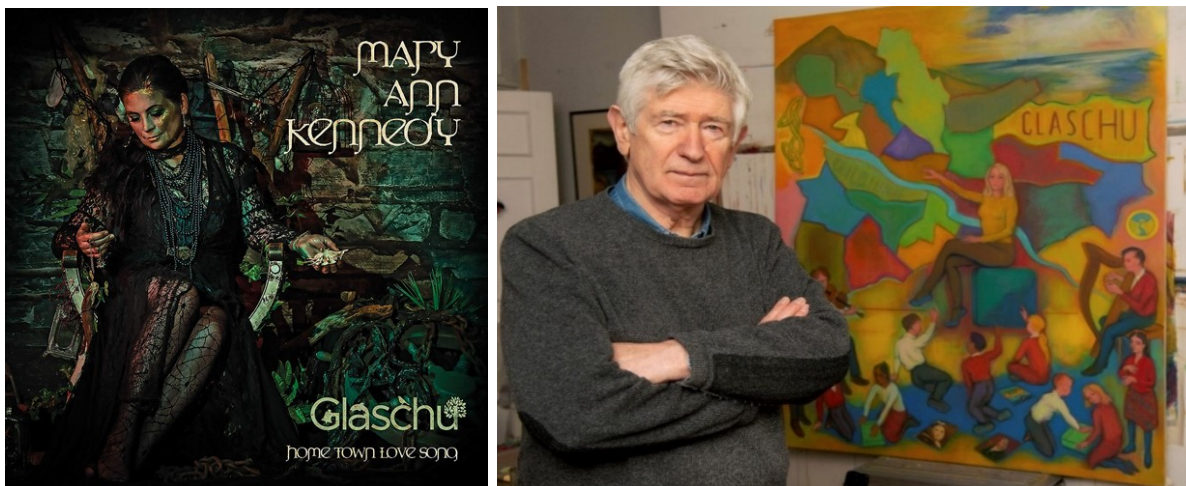


Figure 2: Right: Mary Ann Kennedy cites the research as a key influence in her work about Glasgow, including an acknowledgement in her album *Glaschu*. Left: Artist Sandy Moffat OBE and his [Glasgow-Gàidhlig painting](#).

By linking language, history and place, the research has also enriched a range of artistic and cultural activities and outputs across Glasgow. A programme installed across the city under ‘*Glaschu Gàidhlig*’ was among a series of festivals between 2017–2019, along with the AyeWrite! book festival and Merchant City Arts Festival. Additional events were held for the Royal National Mòd (the principal festival of Gaelic literature, song, arts and culture) in October 2019. In July 2017 and August 2018 two multi-media *Glaschu Gàidhlig* ‘Song Trails’ were held, showcasing creativity and culture using Glasgow Gaelic. Glasgow Life’s Gaelic Arts Producer [5.1] noted that ‘*the Gaelic Song Trail ... was sold out in 2018 and these events and performances could only have been developed with Glasgow University’s input*’.

The Song Trails were curated and performed by accomplished musician and BBC broadcaster [Mary Ann Kennedy](#) (whose awards include [Gaelic singer of the Year 2019](#)), other Gaelic singers and actors, and a community choir. The two Song Trails journeyed through Glasgow's historic core, with footage of performances hosted on [Glaschu.net](#). In 2019 Kennedy released an album *Glaschu* (previewed at *Celtic Connections* festival, Glasgow) featuring songs from the Song Trail. Mary Ann Kennedy [5.8] commented that the UofG researchers shared '*vital information from their collective researches on people, places, city history etc., that brought the Glaschu songs vividly to life*' as well as '*broadened my perspective*'. Of attendees surveyed in August 2018, 76% said the event changed their understanding of Gaelic's place in the history of Glasgow [5.9].

In January 2020, Glasgow Life in partnership with the Hunterian and UofG, commissioned distinguished painter [Sandy Moffat](#), who was artist-in-residence to the Royal National Mòd, to produce an artwork inspired by Gaelic culture. Moffat stated that '*a key influence, besides Glasgow's Gaelic Medium Education, was finding out about the depth of Glasgow's Gaelic heritage from Alasdair Whyte's placename research*' [5.10].

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 Testimonial letter, Gaelic Arts Producer, Glasgow Life, dated February 2020 [PDF], corroborating the impact of the partnership between Glasgow Life and UofG, in supporting the cultural sustainability of Gaelic in Glasgow, supporting Glasgow Life's work enriching opportunities for cultural use of Gaelic, and adding visibility to the relationship between the city and language.
- 5.2 Web analytics reports from Glasgow Life on [Glaschu.net](#), up to 26 November 2020 [PDF], corroborating use of the website including geographical origin and referral source.
- 5.3 Testimonial letter, via email: Principal Librarian, Northeast Glasgow, and Principal Librarian, the Mitchell [PDF]. Corroborating the impact of [Glaschu.net](#) on the Mitchell's display of their Gaelic language resources.
- 5.4 Summary report on GUGA exhibition [PDF], detailing visitor numbers and promotion.
- 5.5 Testimonial email, Deputy Director, Hunterian Museum & Art Gallery [PDF], detailing how the UofG Gaelic research and expertise, including on placenames, supported the Hunterian in its approach to the GUGA exhibition, and how the resulting use of Gaelic as the primary language is now having an impact on future exhibition programmes for the museum.
- 5.6 Glasgow Life: *Glasgow City Archives open new display on the history of Gaels in Glasgow ahead of Mod Glaschu 2019*. 7<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019. [PDF, also available at <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/news/glasgow-city-archives-open-new-display-on-the-history-of-gaels-in-glasgow-ahead-of-mod-ghlaschu-2019>]
- 5.7 Testimonial email, Archivist, Glasgow City Archives, dated 10 February 2020 [PDF], corroborating the value and usefulness of [Glaschu.net](#) for preparing their exhibition *Glasgow Gaels*.
- 5.8 Testimonial email, Mary Ann Kennedy, dated January 2019 [PDF], corroborating and detailing the value the UofG Gaelic research, especially in establishing the deep historical connection between Glasgow and the language, had for her as an artist.
- 5.9 Summary of feedback collected at the Gaelic Song trail, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2018 [PDF], corroborating impact of these events on members of the public who attended.
- 5.10 Testimonial email, Sandy Moffat [PDF], corroborating the influence of the UofG placename research on his commissioned artwork.