

**Title:**

Portree, Isle of Skye

**Shelfmark:**

C1190/43/30

**Recording date:**

10.03.2005

**Speakers:**

MacDonald, Iona, b. 1961 Glasgow; female (father b. Glasgow, musician & joiner; mother b. Dunvegan, Skye, nurse/midwife)

Nicolson, Alistair, b. 1941 Brogaig, Skye; male (father b. Staffin, seaman; mother b Staffin, housewife)

Ross, Alister, b. 1939 Kingsburgh, Skye; male (father b. Kilmuir, Skye, crofter, tram conductor & tram driver; mother b. Bernisdale, Skye, domestic worker)

The interviewees are all friends who have spent most of their lives on the Isle of Skye.

PLEASE NOTE: this recording is still awaiting full linguistic description (i.e. phonological, grammatical and spontaneous lexical items).

A summary of the specific lexis elicited by the interviewer is given below.

**ELICITED LEXIS**

- see English Dialect Dictionary (1898-1905)
- † see Dictionary of the Scots Language (online edition)
- ‡ see Linguistic Atlas of Scotland (1975-1986)
- △ see New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (2006)
- ◇ see Green's Dictionary of Slang (2010)
- ◆ see Urban Dictionary (online)
- ◊ no previous source (with this sense) identified

**pleased** *delighted; very happy; over the moon; chuffed* (“slangy”); *made-up* (“I was made-up about it”); *high* (“she was awfy high about it”<sup>1</sup> used by relative from Midlothian, also used for “snooty/nose-in-the-air”<sup>2</sup>); *cool* (modern)

**tired** *exhausted; worn-out; tired; knackered* (“favourite”); *shattered; fyown*<sup>†</sup> (used by friend from Helmsdale who was unaware it comes from Gaelic “fann” meaning “weak/tired”<sup>3</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (online) records ‘awfy’ in sense of ‘very/extremely’.

<sup>2</sup> *OED* (online edition) includes ‘high’ in this sense.

<b>unwell</b>	<i>sick; got a galar<sup>4</sup> (Gaelic for ‘disease’); wabbit (used occasionally by mother for “somewhere between unwell and tired”, thought to be Scots for “wee bit off-colour/listless/washed out”); poorly; unwell; under the weather</i>
<b>hot</b>	<i>burning; sweltering; too warm; roasting; melting</i>
<b>cold</b>	<i>freezing (“emphatic”); chilly; nippy</i>
<b>annoyed</b>	<i>annoyed; mad (“I was really mad about that”); “she hit the roof/went ballistic” (heard used recently of mother annoyed by her son); distressed; beiling<sup>†</sup> (“I was beiling about it” associated with Glasgow, used jokingly)</i>
<b>throw</b>	<i>chuck; fling; fire; throw; cast</i>
<b>play truant</b>	<i>dogging school<sup>†</sup> (used locally by children in past, “did you hear that Iona MacDonald dogged school yesterday” suggested jokingly); dodging school<sup>‡</sup> (suggested by interviewer); dodging<sup>‡</sup>; dogging<sup>†</sup>; run away<sup>5</sup> (“run away from school”); truanting (used as teacher); skiving (“skiving school” used in 1970s); bunking; skived; bunking off; wagging (“wagging school” suggested by colleagues, not heard locally)</i>
<b>sleep</b>	<i>sleep; out for the count<sup>^</sup>; kip, doss (thought to be Scots); snooze; dozing; having a nap</i>
<b>play a game</b>	<i>play (of e.g. football/tennis); participate (“too highfalutin/formal”)</i>
<b>hit hard</b>	<i>belt; slap; hammer; ram; knock; smash; thump; skelp (suggested by interviewer, used of “wee slap”); scloug<sup>†</sup> (thought to be Gaelic for “skelp” used frequently by e.g. mothers as threat, thought to be spelt “sgleoc”, liked)</i>
<b>clothes</b>	<i>togs, threads (“slang”); clothes</i>
<b>trousers</b>	<i>trousers; jeans (used of denim trousers now); brigis<sup>6</sup> (Gaelic for ‘trousers’); breeks; winners (“winners and losers”<sup>^Δ</sup> Glasgow rhyming slang used by Glaswegian father for “troosers”<sup>†</sup> subsequently adopted within family)</i>
<b>child’s shoe</b>	<i>sand-shoes; jimmies<sup>^</sup>, trainers, pumps (suggested by colleagues); plimsolls (used in shop)</i>
<b>mother</b>	<i>mum (used as adult); mummy (used as young child); màthair<sup>7</sup> (Gaelic for ‘mother’); mammy (most common locally in past, “I’m going to tell my mammy about you”)</i>
<b>gmother</b>	<i>grandma; nana; seanmhair<sup>8</sup> (Gaelic for ‘grandmother’, not heard used non-Gaelic speakers unlike “shenar” meaning ‘grandfather’); grandmother; granny (“granny Morag granny Clarice” (used by own nieces/nephews to distinguish between maternal/paternal grandmother); gran; nana (used by own nieces); grandma (used by cousin’s family in contrast to “gran” to distinguish between maternal/paternal grandmother)</i>
<b>m partner</b>	<i>husband; boyfriend; bodach grànnda<sup>9</sup> (Gaelic for “horrible old man” suggested jokingly); partner; man</i>
<b>friend</b>	<i>friend (most common); pal; mate (“is Sheila your girlfriend no she’s just a mate” used by young speakers of male/female to distinguish from girlfriend/boyfriend, also used of e.g. “flat-mate”); chum; crony (used by father); mucker, buddy (“imports from elsewhere”)</i>
<b>gfather</b>	<i>grandad; shenar<sup>†</sup> (Gaelic for ‘grandfather’, most common locally, also adopted by non-Gaelic speakers); sean<sup>10</sup> (abbreviation of “shenar” used by friends from Isle of Barra); papa<sup>♦</sup>; gammy<sup>11</sup>; grampy<sup>◇</sup>; grandpa</i>

<sup>3</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘fann’ in this sense.

<sup>4</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) records ‘galar’ in sense of ‘disease/ailment’.

<sup>5</sup> *OED* (online edition) records ‘run away’ in sense of ‘to abscond’.

<sup>6</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘brigis’ in this sense.

<sup>7</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘màthair’ in this sense.

<sup>8</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘seanmhair’ in this sense.

<sup>9</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) records ‘bodach’ in sense of ‘old man’ and ‘grànnda’ in sense of ‘ugly/unseemly’.

<sup>10</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘sean’ in this sense.

<b>forgot name</b>	<i>thingummy; thingummyjig<sup>Δ</sup>; whatchamacallit; doodah; who-d'ye-cum-flip<sup>Δ</sup></i> (probably learnt from mother); <i>what-d'ye-call-it; what's-his-name</i>
<b>kit of tools</b>	<i>tool-kit; tool bag; workbox</i> (considered “ <i>more feminine</i> ” than e.g. builder’s ‘kit of tools’)
<b>trendy</b>	<i>ned</i> (suggested by friend with teenage children as used of young person “ <i>slightly on the wrong side of the law</i> ”); <i>scaff<sup>†</sup></i> (suggested by friend with teenage children as used in Portree High School); <i>trendy; in the fashion; fashionable</i>
<b>f partner</b>	<i>wife</i> (of married/unmarried female partner); <i>partner; woman; lady; other half; better half; girlfriend; the wife, the old lady</i> (of own wife); <i>the present Mrs Nicolson<sup>12</sup></i> (learnt from Terry Wogan <sup>13</sup> ); <i>bidie in<sup>†</sup></i> (used frequently by friends in Glasgow of unmarried co-habiting partner, “ <i>derogatory</i> ”, understood but not used locally, also heard used in Aberdeen/Ayrshire, considered useful if unsure of status of relationship)
<b>baby</b>	<i>wee one<sup>Δ</sup></i> (“ <i>Joan and the wee ones are away</i> ”, thought to be translation of “ <i>té beag</i> ” <sup>14</sup> , common locally, liked); <i>bab<sup>†</sup>; nipper; sprog; wain<sup>†</sup></i> (considered Glaswegian English, used “ <i>in jest</i> ”); <i>bairn; baby</i> (most common, “ <i>more respectful</i> ”); <i>child</i>
<b>rain heavily</b>	<i>pouring; lashing down<sup>15</sup>; bucketing<sup>16</sup>; torrential; stair-rods; cats and dogs</i> (“ <i>raining cats and dogs</i> ”)
<b>toilet</b>	<i>toilet</i> (most common now); <i>lavatory</i> (used in past, considered “ <i>U</i> ” i.e. ‘upper-class’ <sup>17</sup> ); <i>bathroom; closet</i> (“ <i>a bit dated</i> ”); <i>tigh-beg<sup>‡</sup></i> (Gaelic); <i>water-closet; bog, cludge<sup>Δ</sup></i> (“ <i>slang</i> ”); <i>loo</i> (thought to be increasingly common under influence of TV, thought to be abbreviation of “ <i>Waterloo</i> ”, disputed: thought to come from “ <i>gardyloo</i> ” <sup>18</sup> ); <i>john; dunny</i>
<b>walkway</b>	<i>pavement; path; lane; alley; close</i> (suggested by interviewer, thought to be covered walkway); <i>gangway</i> (heard used in Skye, also used of e.g. harbour/airport/shipping terminal)
<b>long seat</b>	<i>sofa; couch; bench; séiseach<sup>19</sup></i> (Gaelic for “ <i>settle</i> ”/‘wooden couch’ commonplace in past, used among Gaelic speakers); <i>being<sup>20</sup></i> (Gaelic for ‘bench’ suggested by interviewer, not used)
<b>run water</b>	<i>stream; burn</i> (most common locally)
<b>main room</b>	<i>living-room; lounge</i> (considered “ <i>posher</i> ”); <i>sitting-room; kitchen</i> (used in past); <i>the room</i> (of room reserved for special occasions in past jokingly referred to as “ <i>the minister’s room</i> ” as child); <i>front room</i> (used by grandmother of room reserved for special occasions e.g. New Year)
<b>rain lightly</b>	<i>drizzle; spitting; damp<sup>◊</sup></i> (also used sarcastically of heavy rain locally)
<b>rich</b>	(not discussed)
<b>left-handed</b>	<i>left-handed; kearack<sup>‡</sup></i> (Gaelic for ‘left-handed’ <sup>21</sup> ); <i>corrie fisted<sup>‡</sup></i> (used by sister of own left-handed children, thought to be Scots)
<b>unattractive</b>	<i>ugly</i> (most common); <i>plain; a face only a mother could love<sup>22</sup></i>

<sup>11</sup> Wiktionary (<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/gammy>) includes ‘gammy’ in this sense.

<sup>12</sup> Desmond (2016) records ‘the present Mrs Wogan’ in this sense.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Michael Terence Wogan (1938-2016), Irish radio and TV presenter.

<sup>14</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) records ‘té’ in sense of ‘one’ and ‘beag’ in sense of ‘little one’.

<sup>15</sup> *Macmillan Dictionary* (<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/>) includes ‘lash’ in this sense.

<sup>16</sup> *Macmillan Dictionary* (<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/>) includes ‘bucket down’ in this sense.

<sup>17</sup> *OED* (online edition) includes ‘U’ in this sense.

<sup>18</sup> *OED* (online edition) discusses both as poss. etymology.

<sup>19</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘séiseach’ in this sense.

<sup>20</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘being’ in this sense.

<sup>21</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘cearrach’ in this sense.

<sup>22</sup> Dolphin (1982, p.21) includes ‘face only a mother could love’ in this sense.

<b>lack money</b>	<i>broke</i> (common locally); <i>skint</i> (“Scots word” used locally); <i>short</i> (“I’m short this month”); <i>poor</i> ; <i>strapped</i> (“strapped for cash” <sup>23</sup> ); <i>boracic</i> (“boracic lint skint” rhyming slang)
<b>drunk</b>	<i>tiddly</i> ; <i>pissed</i> ; <i>steaming</i> <sup>Δ</sup> ; <i>stocious</i> ; <i>jaked</i> <sup>Δ</sup> ; <i>plastered</i> ; <i>mortal</i> ; <i>well-shot</i> <sup>24</sup> (used in Highlands); <i>smashed</i> ; <i>under the influence</i> (“very formal”); <i>miraculous</i> <sup>Δ</sup> (suggested by interviewer as associated with Billy Connolly <sup>25</sup> , heard used in Ullapool, liked)
<b>pregnant attractive</b>	<i>pregnant</i> ; <i>expecting</i> ; <i>on the way</i> ; <i>in the club</i> ; <i>bun in the oven</i> ; <i>up the duff</i> (“coarse”) <i>bonny</i> ; <i>attractive</i> ; <i>nice-looking</i> ; <i>glamorous</i> ; <i>good-looking</i> ; <i>cracker</i> ; <i>T.M.</i> <sup>Δ</sup> (acronym for “tricky man” <sup>26</sup> used by sister since university in Glasgow); <i>brammer</i> <sup>†</sup> (suggested by interviewer as used on West coast, associated with Glasgow, heard used in Lewis, thought to be related to “bràmaer” Gaelic for ‘girlfriend/boyfriend’ <sup>27</sup> )
<b>insane</b>	<i>mad</i> ; <i>nuts</i> ; <i>loobie</i> <sup>♦</sup> ; <i>coo-coo</i> <sup>◇</sup> ; <i>crackers</i> ; “there’s wiser eating grass” <sup>28</sup> (heard used by colleague from Inverness, liked); <i>off your head</i> ; <i>not the full shilling</i> <sup>◇</sup> (“you’ve got to make allowances he’s not the full shilling”, associated with Glasgow); <i>the lift doesn’t go all the way to the top floor</i> <sup>Δ</sup> ; <i>one song short of a ceilidh</i> <sup>29</sup> (used recently by colleague working in traditional music, presumed idiolectal, liked); <i>a couple of turrets short of a castle</i> <sup>30</sup> (heard used recently by Skye resident of another Skye resident trying to sell part of the island, presumed idiolectal, liked)
<b>moody</b>	<i>girn</i> <sup>†</sup> ; <i>having a boose on</i> <sup>†</sup> (Gaelic expression used frequently and universally understood locally); <i>droll</i> <sup>31</sup> (common locally, also used for “strange” <sup>○</sup> ); <i>deep</i> <sup>32</sup> (of uncommunicative person); <i>up and down</i> (“och, he’s up and down” of “unpredictable” person)

© Robinson, Herring, Gilbert

*Voices of the UK*, 2009-2012

A British Library project funded by The Leverhulme Trust

<sup>23</sup> *Macmillan Dictionary* (<https://www.macmillandictionary.com/>) includes ‘strapped for cash’ in this sense.

<sup>24</sup> *OED* (online edition) records ‘shot’ in this sense.

<sup>25</sup> Sir William Connolly (b.1924), Scottish comedian, musician, presenter and actor.

<sup>26</sup> *Urban Dictionary* (online) records ‘tricky’ in this sense.

<sup>27</sup> *Am Faclair Beag* (<http://www.faclair.com/>) includes ‘bràmaer’ in this sense.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher Somerville’s *The Spirit of Ireland* (2003, p.98) includes ‘there’s wiser ones eating grass’ in this sense.

<sup>29</sup> Gaynor Duncan’s tweet *Must be I’m now two Gay Gordons short of a ceilidh*. (28.03.15 –

<https://twitter.com/gaynorduncan/status/339358443620147202>) includes ‘two Gay Gordons short of a ceilidh’ in this sense.

<sup>30</sup> *New Partridge Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (2006) records ‘NOUN (part) short of a NOUN (whole) in this sense.

<sup>31</sup> *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905) records ‘droll’ in sense of ‘rude/unmanageable’.

<sup>32</sup> *Urban Dictionary* (online) records ‘deep’ in sense of ‘when someone is harsh/cold towards someone else’.