

Edinburgh filmmaker shortlisted for Gaelic awards

Edinburgh author and screenwriter, [Alison Lang](#), has been shortlisted for three awards in the Gaelic film competition, [FilmG](#).

Taistealachd – which translates as “Pilgrimage” – is up for best student film, best performance, and best factual short, with the winners announced on 9 March 2012.

Despite this achievement, Alison’s first language is in fact English – not Gaelic. She started learning as an adult thirteen years ago, and since then has used the language to become a published author and journalist.

She’s one of a growing number of Edinburgh-based English speakers who are starting to learn and use the language, as The Scottish Government pushes ahead with its five year [Gaelic Language Plan](#).



Alison Lang has been shortlisted in three categories for her short film, *Taistealachd*.
Image: Alexandra Wingate

Gaelic Language Plan

Launched in 2008, the scheme is part of the National Plan for Gaelic and the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 aiming to protect the minority language and its culture.

As well as plans for Gaelic signs around the city, Edinburgh council are opening a dedicated Gaelic school in August 2013 on the site of the old Bonnington Primary School.

Councillor Deidre Brock, convenor of the council's culture and leisure committee, said:- "The demand for Gaelic education is swelling so much that, where it is at the moment at Tollcross Primary School as a unit – basically it's bursting at the scenes and they really need the space."

"People are really realising the benefits of bilingualism, and a lot of people are interested in maintaining links with their Highland and Islands heritage."

There's also a strategy in place for The Scottish Storytelling Centre to increase its activity around both Gaelic and Scots – another of Scotland's minority languages – with an extra budget this year going towards supporting traditional arts and language development.

Gaelic in Edinburgh

With the country's largest urban population of Gaelic speakers, Gaelic organisations see Edinburgh as having an important role in supporting the language.

John Macleod, president of An Comunn Gàidhealach, says: "It's obviously very important that Edinburgh, as the capital of Scotland, sets an example to the rest of the country."

"[Gaelic] is part of our [Scottish] heritage and it's an important language and a culture to maintain for future generations."

He continued:- "If we could convince parents that teaching Gaelic to children is highly desirable from a very early age, that would be a tremendous advantage; children could grow up to be bilingual and it would be a great start in life for them."

Mistakes of the past

These nationwide moves to support Gaelic are an attempt to reverse the mistakes of previous generations.

Councillor Brock explains: “Gaelic never went into a gentle decline – it was actively discouraged. We still have stories from grandparents living today of being hit for speaking Gaelic in the classroom.”

A few English words borrowed from Scottish Gaelic

There’s no famous *slogan* for this advice, but it doesn’t mean it’s *phony*.

You’ll need *spunk galore* if you’re *keen* to climb *Ben* Nevis with your *pet*. Just make sure you’re wearing *trousers* and a *Mackintosh* in case the rain comes *teaming* down – you wouldn’t want your trip to end in *smithereens*.

And get some *whisky* down your *gob* if you want to have a *shindig* by the *loch* with a local *clan*; it will guarantee you have a *smashing* time.