

Anne Lorne Gillies

MA, PhD, Dr hc, PGCE, LRAM

A brief resumé

Dr Anne Lorne Gillies is a fluent Gaelic speaker who combines classical musical training with a deep understanding of Scottish musical, historical and literary tradition. Raised on a croft in Argyll, she won the **Gold Medal** for singing at the **National Mòd** when only 17, then went on to read Celtic and English at **Edinburgh University**, and to work part-time in the **School of Scottish Studies**.

After graduation she studied singing in Italy and London, where she also trained as a teacher, before embarking upon a high-profile international solo career singing in Gaelic, English, Scots, French, German, Italian and Spanish on television and radio, concerts, recitals, festivals, theatre shows and albums.

In the 1980s her career-path altered as she became more and more immersed in the urgent social and political struggle to reverse the decline of the Gaelic language in Scotland. She helped to establish the **Gaelic Playgroup Association**, and was a leading member of the group which persuaded local authorities to offer Gaelic-medium education in primary schools and, later, at secondary level.

She became **National Education Officer** of the language agency **Comann na Gàidhlig**, completed a **PhD** in Gaelic-medium education at the **University of Glasgow**, and lectured in Gaelic at the **University of Strathclyde**.



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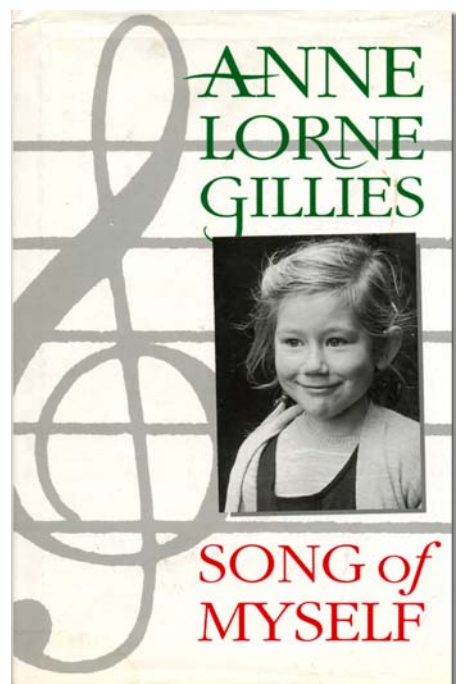
In 1997 Anne's concern for the future of Gaelic persuaded her to stand for the **UK Parliament** on behalf of the **Western Isles**, and, two years later, for the **European Parliament**.

She has also worked behind the cameras, producing many programmes, including **STV's** flagship Gaelic language-learning series *Speaking our Language*; a hugely-popular Gaelic Country Music series; a musical chronicle of the 1745 Jacobite Rising; and a 45-minute drama documentary about writer Neil Munro, filmed on location in Argyll. Most recently Anne wrote and presented *Dà chànan aon chridhe / Twa leids ane hert* (Two languages, one heart) about the life and times of **Robert Burns**.

Anne has released many albums during her career. Her most recent all reflect her interest in Scots and Gaelic literature and history:-

- *The Lady of the Lake* – songs from Sir Walter Scott's celebrated verse-poem (including "Hail to the chief" and "Ave Maria")
- *White Rose o' June* – songs by ever-popular Jacobite composer Lady Nairne
- ("Will ye no come back again", "Rowan Tree", "Charlie is my darling", "The Auld Hoose" etc.)
- *An Long Hirteach / St Kilda Mailboat* – songs from St Kilda

Anne is a talented writer, in both Gaelic and English: stories, songs, poems, plays, children's books, film and TV scripts; autobiography (*Song of Myself*, Mainstream, 1992). In 2005 she won **An Comunn Gàidhealach's** prize for Gaelic teenage fiction, and published her seminal collection *"Songs of Gaelic Scotland"*.



At present she is editing a collection of Gaelic poetry for children, and writing a historical novel in English.

Throughout her career Anne has passed on her skills, as both singer and writer, in workshops, seminars, residencies and training courses. For many years she was Gaelic Song Tutor at **Stirling University's Heritage of Scotland Summer Schools**: her many talented students included **Karen Matheson, Màiri MacInnes and Talitha MacKenzie**.

She has devised and delivered highly-successful Gaelic writing and story-telling workshops for both children and adults. One Gaelic schools residency resulted in the beautifully-illustrated poetry collection *Leabhar Beag na Gàidhlig*, published by Wordfirsts.

Anne was chosen as **Speaker of the Year, 2005**, by the **Association of Speakers' Clubs of Great Britain** – following in the footsteps of luminaries such as the great actor **Peter Ustinov** and politician **Tony Benn**!

One of her most exciting engagements as Speaker of the Year was as "closing act" of the first-ever **Edinburgh Festival of Politics**, in the Main Debating Chamber of Scotland's stunning **Holyrood Parliament**.

She was awarded an **honorary degree** by the **University of Edinburgh** (1993) in recognition of her contribution to Gaelic culture, and **Rotary International's Paul Harris Fellowship** (2003) for her voluntary and charitable work.



"Anne's performance was, quite simply, superb. It was redolent with history, full of wonderful music, both familiar and unfamiliar, and it proved, as if there was any doubt about it, that Anne Lorne Gillies is a true Renaissance Woman." (St Andrews Society Banner)