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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Focus on World War Two project resource for primary schools at An t-Alltan conference**

An interdisciplinary resource which aims to provide Gaelic Medium Education teachers with a ‘one stop shop’ of topic-specific material for the classroom is being launched at the national An t-Alltan conference for GME practitioners being held in Aviemore this week (Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 September).

An Dàrna Cogadh was developed by Gaelic educational resources organisation Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig in response to Gaelic Medium Education practitioners’ requests for a comprehensive teaching package, based online, on the subject of World War Two.

Available online at [www.storlann.co.uk/an-darna-cogadh](http://www.storlann.co.uk/an-darna-cogadh), the resource brings together many informative Gaelic texts and books— some created especially for this project — with a rich variety of other material from the wider world.

The project encompasses web, print and video. The website itself combines vintage-style design with World War Two iconography — the image of a Spitfire features on the main page – to give maximum impact and the books which were specially commissioned are also heavily illustrated. The project was designed in-house by the design team of Anne McCormack, Principal Designer (Publications) and Neil Smith, Head of Development Services.

Neil said: “It is hoped that the variety of styles and imagery used will bring the project to life for children and illuminate the historical and emotive subject matter.”

Stòrlann chief executive Donald W Morrisson said: “It’s quite a diverse topic pack. Our first topic for schools was Vikings and when this idea came along we thought we’d have small artefacts from World War Two but practitioners said, ‘we’d much rather an online learning resource, that we can give to the children. It’s all tied in with Experiences and Outcomes for Curriculum for Excellence and Benchmarks for education. It’s a really nice resource.”

The request was to create a resource that could be used for upper stage primary pupils, from P4 to 7. Being interdisciplinary, it takes in as many different aspects of the curriculum as possible, including Literacy, History, Geography, the Expressive Arts, Technology and Health and Wellbeing and Religious and Moral Education.

There are a number of sub-topics within An Dàrna Cogadh, including the Home Front, Evacuees, Anne Frank, The Blitz, Prisoners of War, the role of Women in Wartime, Rationing and the ‘grow your own’ campaign, Anderson Shelters and gas masks and Remembrance Sunday.

There are two main online portals to the resource. The first link goes to the version for teachers, which is rich in planning and assessment documents, while the other link is for pupils.

The planning documents include question sheets and personal plans for pupils. Personalisation and choice, a key feature of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), is also built into An Dàrna Cogadh, and sheets covering ‘what I know’, ‘what I’d like to find out’ and ‘what I learned’ have been provided to help shape learning.

There are also ideas for assessment, including suggestions for peer assessment, and lists of the relevant CfE Experiences and Outcomes, plus benchmarks, have been provided ‘at a glance’ to help teachers. Stòrlann have also identified which higher order thinking skills the children will be utilising at various points in the project — again, to help with teachers’ planning and tracking.

The material that has been brought together for An Dàrna Cogadh includes written texts, many created in Gaelic specifically for this project, and pre-existing material, some in Gaelic but some also left in English when any alteration would have been inappropriate.

These include the recording of Neville Chamberlain's speech of September 3, 1939, when he told the country we were now at war with Germany, episodes from Carrie's War and an old recording of a conversation, preserved by the online archive, Tobar an Dualchais, in which two former Prisoners of War speak in Gaelic about their experience of being captured by the Germans at St Valery.

The resource also links to Education Scotland's history section, to the website of The Highlanders Museum at Fort George and to an online tour of Anne Frank's apartment.

Several books are also to accompany the An Dàrna Cogadh project, including two new commissions from writer Morag Stewart, which should be available later in the year.

The first book is a fictional story, Dòchas an t-Samhraidh, about a little boy whose father had been killed in the war and is sent away to live with relatives. The novel features illustrations from Julian de Navarez in an artistic black and white style.

The second book, Leabhar Latha Chaluum, is the diary of a fictional character who is serving in the war with the 51st Highland Division and ends up on the run from the enemy.

The main characters in the two books are linked and the diary is left open-ended so that the children can make up their own ending – personalisation and choice, again — and Stòrlann has also translated a piece of writing on evacuees which was originally produced by West Dunbartonshire.

That book, Na h-Evacuees, will be available in print and as an e-book. Illustrations were commissioned from Des Campbell, who used a distinctive, child-friendly, watercolour style.

The resource also contains a Gaelic version of The Scotsman's front page from 1941 about the Clydebank blitz plus information on how we receive our news nowadays, from Twitter feeds to the news broadcasts on Gaelic radio and television.

There are even blank templates for Twitter feeds and newspaper front pages for the children to create their own, plus templates for animations and film-strips. In addition to the templates, Henry Moore's war paintings are referenced to inspire the children to make their own art works.

There are also suggested frameworks for debates, such as the benefits or otherwise for evacuees, and ideas for dramatic performance.

Jayne MacAskill, Stòrlann's Development Officer for Primary Resources in Gaelic Education, said they had included "anything that helps the teacher".

She added: "There's flexibility in how the teacher might want to use it. There's a lot of learning material on here. You can tap in or tap out. You can do a full term's work or just do bits. It's a starter for ten but the main thing is the text is there and the audio files are there.

"I think the main benefit is that they don't need to look at English sites to research. They may do, but the bulk of the information that they need is available here and the texts are simple enough for the children to access and understand.

"There are lots of opportunities for talking and listening and there is a collection of photographs, images, video... so for teachers it saves a lot of planning on their part and children can access this at home if they get a keen interest in the topic.

"It's a first for Stòrlann in that there isn't a similar site or resource that can be accessed by pupils online in Gaelic Medium Education. Plus it meets all the demands of CfE."

## Notes:

The resource has been live online for a year but Stòrlann hope to use the An t-Alltan conference opportunity to boost awareness of it and encourage more teachers to make use of it.

Now in its ninth year, An t-Alltan is organised by Stòrlann and has grown very year. It is taking place in the Macdonald Aviemore Conference Centre on September 27 and 28. Around 200 teachers from the early years sector through to high school are expected to attend.

There will be nearly 30 workshops across the two days and 18 exhibitors.

Stòrlann was established by the Scottish Executive in 1999 to co-ordinate the production and distribution of curriculum resources for Gaelic education. Stòrlann is a limited company, registered number SC190298, and a charity registered in Scotland as SC 031521.

Under Stòrlann's publication programme, resources are distributed free of charge to nurseries, primary schools, secondary schools and lifelong learning groups every year. Priorities are set by teaching staff and learners and strategic planning and implementation is supported by local authorities through the MRG consortium and by appropriate lifelong learning organisations.

A small selection of Stòrlann's resources are available for purchase by the general public via [www.gaelicbooks.org](http://www.gaelicbooks.org) and a range of free interactive resources for families can also be found at the organisation's site [www.gaelic4parents.com](http://www.gaelic4parents.com), where families can also access support with homework and other issues relating to Gaelic education.

### **For further information:**

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Tha Stòrlann Nàiseanta na Gàidhlig a' faighinn taic bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig agus Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

