



# An Comunn Gàidhealach

Royal National Mòd – Lochaber – 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October 2017

The Highland Society of London presents awards for Gaelic solo singing – for Girls aged 16-18, and for Boys aged 16-18. The winners this year were Emily Robertson from Falkirk Junior Choir, and Ryan Johnston from Bowmore in Islay. A full list of the prize winners is at: <http://www.ancomunn.co.uk/nationalmod/results#>.

***Seonag Anderson, Mòd Officer at An Comunn Gàidhealach, wrote:***

“It was a brilliant Mòd and a very busy one too – now for the preparation for next year. 2018 takes us to Dunoon, so hope fully that will go without a hitch as well. Fort William is a brilliant place, although I think now that it’s getting a bit small with such a huge number of competitors attending. Please pass on our thanks to the Society for the generous prizes that you send us each year.”



*Left: Ryan Johnston, 16, from Islay, who won the boys solo singing 16-18 years open.*

*Right: Emily Robertson from Airdrie, with the Highland Society of London Trophy.*



***The Oban Times recently carried an article about the increased participation at the Mòd:***

An initiative formed in Oban and Lochaber to encourage more young people to compete at the Royal National Mòd is a proven success, says the Mòd’s chief executive. The Mod Academy organises Gaelic and music tuition and advice for schools, in an effort to boost entries to the Gaelic showcase event. It was initially formed in Oban ahead of the Royal National Mòd in the town in 2015, as junior competitors from the Lorn area were sorely lacking at the 2014 event in Inverness.

Using a legacy fund from the 2009 Mòd in Oban, music tutors visited schools in the Oban area in the build up to the Royal National Mòd 2015 and oversaw a boost in entries from the local area that year. And the success of the Oban initiative continues to bear fruit; Mòd Academy singing tutor Mary Catherine MacNeil coached two of this year’s learner solo competition winners, Andrew MacPhail and Millie Bonniwell.

In Lochaber, funding has been secured for a second year of the Mòd Academy. The initiative was launched in the build up to this year’s event and has resulted in a large number of Lochaber’s schools taking part. Kinlochleven entered a choir this year for the first time in decades.

John Morrison, chief executive of Mòd organiser An Comunn Gàidhealach, said: “We saw that a Mòd Academy worked in Oban and it brought an awful lot of local children into the Mòd. We felt it was important that we did the same in Lochaber and we funded it through ourselves, Highland Council and local contributions, including half of the retirement collection at the funeral of Charlie MacColl, who was a great supporter of Gaelic tuition for children. We have shown that it [Mòd Academy] works, so we plan to do the same in Argyll ahead of next year’s Mòd in Dunoon. The challenge is keeping it going but that is a challenge for the Gaelic community, not just ourselves.”