

Donn Project Themes

The # refers to a separate document with the poem in Gaelic and English

Theme	Sub themes	Poem
Proverb: ‘Is sleamhainn leac doras an taigh-mhòir’ (Slippery is the flagstone at the mansion- house door)		#1. To Dr Morrison[young doctor slipping & falling at door of Tongue House]
Jacobite: 1745-46	<p>Rob Donn, sympathised with the Jacobites and composed poems in their support, such as "Na casagan dubha", which criticised the abolition of Highland dress in 17</p> <p>He took the side of the Stewarts during the Jacobite rebellions even after misfortune overtook them. The oppression, which his countrymen had to endure, is expressed in his song "The Black Cossacks". For his opinions, which he confirmed in this song, he had to appear before the authorities at Tongue. The song was read out to him and the seditious opinions emphasised by him were pointed out. On being asked as to what defence he had to offer, Rob declared that what was recited was only part of the song and then without hesitation added a further two verses praising the House of Hanover upon which he was released.</p>	<p>#5. To Prince Charles Edward Stewart [welcome to prince, star, etc.]</p> <p>#34. To John MacKay [story of capture of Jacobite gold at Tongue & man who keeps some of it]</p> <p>#45. The Black Cassocks [protest after Culloden; change in dress; animal imagery]</p>
Sailing songs (local)		<p>#6. A Maid to Her Lover</p> <p>#55. Davie’s Trip to Orkney</p>

		#82. Trip to Stornoway #99. Neil MacKay and His Crew
Poaching songs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robb Donn made a stand against the law of removing deer from Reay Forrest and was removed from his home to Freisgill on the Moine. • summoned before the Sheriff-Substitute for hunting deer • Robb Donn's favourite hunting ground was Ben Spionnaidh although he travelled the parish widely. 	#7. To John MacKay #43. To Lord Reay's Factor #95. The Court at Tongue (also piper)
Agriculture (men & horses)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. he was employed as Farm Superintendent at Balnakeil in the duty of Lord Reay b. farm at Muisel c. he resided at Achumore. From here the poet and his family removed to Sango d. Balnakeil Bay with church & house as in 18C e. His wife Janet acted as dairywoman and her services as a nurse 	#14. The White Horse of Tarbert [George of Handa & horse; RD pulling plow himself after horse dies]
A streaker at a wedding		#16. MacRory's Breeks
Emigration songs (Badcall Bay & Jamaica)		#17. Christine Brodie #83. Rupert MacKay #98. Col. MacKay
Battle of the sexes		#23. The Dream [sleeper; Pearly Gates; lines of men & women arguing]
Shieling songs (nature)	cowherd,	#24. Town & Country Life

	Silhouette of man in kilt walking with dog [with appropriate clothing & breed for a Highland drover c. 1740].	#35. A Drover and His Sweetheart [also cattle fair at Crieff] #44. Isabel MacKay #97. Anna MacKay
Lady Reay	He served with the Sutherland Fencibles (1759-63),	#29. To Lady Reay [gets soldiers drunk & smuggles deserter out under her skirt at Balnakeil House]
Glen Golly	Born <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strathmore below Ben Hope. Glen Golly • Alltnacaillich in Strathmore "The stream of the Old Woman". • Blackhouse/township 	#36. Glen Golly [18C landscape] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I was born in the winter Among the lowering mountains, And my first sight of the world Snow and wind about my ears.</i>
Winter		#49. To Winter [frozen landscape, starving animals, suffering, poverty]
Sally Grant		#50 & 80. Young lady who was toast of Sutherland Fencibles in Inverness from 1759-63 [dancers, uniforms]
Rev. Murdo MacDonald	<p>A crude flagstone ROBERT DONN 1777 in the cemetery at Balnakeil marks Rob Donn's grave, the Rabbie Burns of Galedom. The stone is becoming difficult to distinguish. He died in 1778.</p> <p>There is a monument to the memory of Rob Donn Calder or Mackay erected in 1827 inscribed with tributes in Greek, Latin, English and Gaelic. A testimony to the high regard in which his work was held. "This tomb was erected at the expense of a few of his countrymen. Ardent admirers of</p>	#67 & 71. Lament & elegy [preaching at Balnakeil Church; reading or singing to children at manse]

	his native talent and extraordinary genius. 1827" In 2014 local people renovated the monument.	
John Sutherland, schoolmaster at Tongue (satires)		#75. attack on maltster #81. various incidents poem about shooting seagull
Mythology	<p>A story is told about another local poet of lesser standing who fancied that he would inherit Donn's talent if he possessed one of the bard's teeth. One night he dug up the grave opened the coffin and extracted a molar. Unfortunately, instead of being blessed with poetic skill, he was cursed with the most excruciating toothache that did not relent until the tooth was returned!</p> <p>A tale is told about a climb up Ben Spionnaidh when his health was failing to bury his gun amongst the stones on the summit. No record or report has been told of it ever being found</p>	
Places, Features& Attributes		