A new organization was established recently to support and represent students of Celtic languages throughout Britain and Ireland, both in universities and outside them. Though Celtic departments are often small in comparison with other subjects, students tend to be highly motivated. Celtic Studies includes a wide variety of topics to do with Celtic languages and peoples both mediaeval and modern, from literary and linguistic perspectives. Some scholars spend their time poring over manuscripts written by monks a thousand years ago, while others working in the field of socio-linguistics use computer analysis to understand changes in the numbers of speakers of the languages today.

You can study Celtic in Scotland, England, Ireland, Wales and in other places worldwide from Harvard to Sydney. Courses tend to focus on the language of the country in which they are situated: for instance students in Wales study Welsh far
more than Irish. Because of this students in one country frequently never encounter the same material studied by their peers in another country who are nominally doing the same subject, and they seldom meet, for the institutions where Celtic can be studied are scattered far apart: it is difficult for someone in Aberdeen to reach Aberystwyth, for example (though we hope some will manage it next year!).

The aim of the new organization—the Association of Celtic Students of Ireland and Britain—is to bring students from different places together so that they can mingle and learn from one another. I was involved with preparations for the first conference in Edinburgh in March. About fifty students from Britain, Ireland and further afield came to present papers and to listen, and they enjoyed the city sights for a couple of days as well. The Welsh are steering the Association at the moment, and doing a good job. The president was on the Welsh language equivalent of the One Show a couple of weeks ago, and there will be a launch event at the National Eisteddfod in Denbigh this week. The organization also has a new logo designed by a Manx speaker which includes an animal from every Celtic country in a triskelion design. The next conference will be held in Aberystwyth in the spring. You can follow the Association on Twitter @CelticStudents or e-mail celtic.students.assoc@gmail.com for more information.