

Chatterbox #238 – Interview with Andrew’s cousin, Sarah

Episode description

Have we got a treat for you! Andrew goes to his mother’s hometown in Scotland and interviews his cousin, Sarah. They talk about language, rural life, the Scottish weather, and vintage cars. We’re sure you’ll enjoy listening to Sarah’s stories ... And her great Scottish accent!

Fun fact

Edinburgh, Scotland, hosts the world’s largest arts festival. It’s called the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, but most people called it simply The Fringe.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Nothing wrong with that
- Fringe
- Paternal
- In [one’s] blood
- Right from the word go
- Vintage



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey, everyone. I'm Andrew and you're listening to Culips.

Welcome back to another addition of our Chatterbox series. My name is Andrew and I will be your host for today. For those of you that are new to Culips, Chatterbox is our series where we give you the opportunity to listen in to real-life conversations about interesting topics and learn how English native speakers talk in these situations.

Today's episode features a very special guest, and I know I say that about every interview, but this time I really mean it because this episode features my cousin from Scotland, Sarah. Now, I was recently in the UK for a summer holiday and, while I was there, I visited my mom's hometown, which is a small town called Dunoon. It's located on the west coast of Scotland, about an hour outside of Glasgow. My mom immigrated to Canada when she was just a little girl, but a lot of my relatives still live in Scotland. This was my first time visiting Scotland, and I absolutely loved it.

Now, unfortunately I only visited Dunoon for 24 hours, but while I was there I got to spend some time with my cousin Sarah and her partner Lawrence, and they were so kind and gave me a great tour of the area and treated me to a delicious dinner, as well. At the end of our visit together, I asked Sarah if I could interview her, and she agreed. We did the interview in Lawrence's **vintage** car, which we drove to a field near the ocean, and I think this is the first Culips episode to ever be recorded in a car. So that was a first for me and a pretty cool experience.

When you listen to the interview, you'll notice Sarah's Scottish accent. Now, Scots are famous for having thick accents, but Sarah's accent is very intelligible and no English native speakers would have any trouble at all understanding it. We chatted about life in Dunoon, learning the Gaelic language, and Sarah's love of **vintage** vehicles.

You may not be familiar with Gaelic, it is the Celtic language that is spoken in Scotland and Ireland, and it is very, very, very different than English. Now Sarah is learning this language and we do talk about this in the interview, so I thought I would just give you a little sense about what Gaelic sounds like. I'm going to play you here a quick clip of the BBC's learning Gaelic podcast so you can hear what it sounds like, all right? Here we go.

Gaelic audio clip.

Andrew: OK, wow, so what an interesting sounding language, right? Completely, totally different from English, guys.

One last thing before we get to the interview, and that is the study guide for this episode is available for download on our website, Culips.com, for all Culips members. It contains the full transcript, as well as vocabulary definitions and examples, writing and speaking prompts, and a quiz. Studying along with the study guide is the best way to learn with this episode, and we highly recommend that you check it out. So just visit Culips.com to find out all the information you need to become a Culips member and study with this guide.

Sarah, thank you for joining me on the podcast.

Sarah: Well, I'm very happy to be here, Andrew, and I'm very happy to have shared the last 24 hours with you, well almost.

Andrew: So for our listeners, quickly, I'll just introduce you. You are my mother's cousin, which makes us related, I guess we're cousins. How do we explain it?

Sarah: We're cousins first removed.

Andrew: Cousins first removed, yes.

Sarah: But to me, everybody who's a cousin is a cousin and that's the end of it. We have blood, we share blood.

Andrew: Exactly. So I am visiting you here in your home of Dunoon, Scotland.

Sarah: That's right.

Andrew: Which is where my mother was born, as well.

Sarah: That's correct.

Andrew: Yeah, and so I came here just to kind of get a view of the landscape and see, you know, the place that I've heard about for so long from my mom and from my mom's side of the family, all the relatives. And such a beautiful place here, where you live.

Sarah: It is, it's beautiful, and today the sun is shining on us. The sky is blue, whereas often it's very windy and very rainy. So if you're thinking of coming to the west coast of Scotland, please bring clothes to last for every season.

- Andrew: Well, I've been struck by how quickly the weather changes here. When I woke up this morning, it was a beautiful sunny day. And it's 11 AM now, it's already rained twice and it's sunny again. So the weather just comes in and then clears out and then comes in again.
- Sarah: Yes, it's very changeable, but we can have long days of nothing but rain in the middle of winter, and that's when we all decide to go to Spain for some sunshine.
- Andrew: **Nothing wrong with that.**
- Sarah: No, I agree. 100%.
- Andrew: So, Sarah, I was hoping that you could describe a little bit what life is like in Scotland for our listeners. We have listeners from all over the world, from Asia and from South America and the Middle East and North America. And what is your day-to-day life like here in Dunoon?
- Sarah: I would say it's a very quiet life in Dunoon. There's not much work for people, we tend to rely on tourism, I still work part time in the care system in Dunoon looking after a young man who has complex learning difficulties, which is very fulfilling, very challenging at times, but also very worthwhile. Dunoon is a quiet town, it's a lovely town, in the midst of beautiful scenery, and I would urge anybody who wants to visit Scotland to come to the west coast. We're right beside the River Clyde, lots of water sports, yachting, sailing, anything you want to do, really. Except if you're going swimming, you have to wear a suit, a wet suit, because the River Clyde is extremely cold.
- Andrew: Extremely cold, yeah, I wouldn't wanna be swimming in there today.
- Sarah: No. So I'm really on the **fringe** of things here, it's a rural area. The city of Glasgow used to be the second city of the Empire, a huge industrial city. We built the world's biggest and best ships many years ago, although now there are hardly any shipyards left and, consequently, all those skilled jobs have gone, which is a great pity. But Glasgow is a lovely city, well worth a visit, it's a vibrant, nightlife in the city, and lots of cultural things to see and do. And then we have our capital city, which is Edinburgh, which is just also a beautiful place. I lived and worked in Edinburgh for many years and loved it. The buildings are astounding, and it's just so worth a visit. It's called the Athens of the North, and the buildings in Edinburgh are beautiful. And then further north you have Aberdeen, which used to be our oil capital until the oil market descended into the depths of the sea.
- Andrew: Right.

- Sarah: And then further north, you have Inverness, which is also a thriving city now, it is a city now, with its own university. And you have the easy access of the highlands and the islands of Scotland from Inverness, which is wonderful. And we still have our native language, which is spoken in these islands. The native language is Gaelic, and my **paternal** grandparents were native Gaelic speakers and I've been trying to learn the language. And I thought to myself, it's **in my blood**, I'm going to pick this language up easily. But, no, it's actually very difficult, but very worthwhile.
- Andrew: Yeah, I actually wanted to talk to you a little bit more about that because, well, everyone that's listening to this podcast now is learning English. So they know exactly what it's like and that struggle to try and learn a foreign language. Maybe could you tell me a little bit more about your motivation for wanting to learn? You said it was **in your blood**, but why is that important to try and revive Gaelic?
- Sarah: It's a dying language, and there have been big moves over the past few years to instill some life into Gaelic. And there are lots of new Gaelic learners now trying our best to master the language in some way. I wanted to do it because I remember my granny speaking Gaelic. And I was very young at the time and realized, obviously, that it wasn't English and that intrigued me **right from the word go**. But in school, in secondary school in Dunoon, we didn't have the opportunity to learn Gaelic, which was terrible, because 50% of the teachers in that school were actually native Gaelic speakers and we could so easily have had a class, but we didn't. It was either French or German that we learned. Yes, so that was my motivation, really, I wanted to help to preserve the language just to do my little bit, yes.
- Andrew: So what is the status of the language now? Are there native speakers these days?
- Sarah: There are still native speakers. The Island of Lewis have never actually lost their Gaelic language, whereas many of the other island did do. And my hometown, Dunoon, used to be native Gaelic speaking in the 1700s, and the last Gaelic speaker passed on about 50, perhaps more than 50 years ago now.
- Andrew: OK. Well, if I ever finish learning Korean, I think I'll have to move on to Gaelic, 'cause I guess it's **in my blood**, too. My ancestors would have been speaking it way back when.
- Sarah: Exactly, your great-grandparents would have been native speakers, yes, that's right.
- Andrew: Yeah, interesting.

- Sarah: Yes, very interesting. And I'm sure if you could master Korean, you will master Gaelic, too. Eighteen letters in the alphabet.
- Andrew: So many things to do and not enough time, that's always the problem.
- Sarah: I know, and it's difficult when you're learning late on in life. I wish I had done it 40 years ago, but I was doing other things then.
- Andrew: So, quickly, Sarah, I'll just talk about one final thing here. Actually, right now we are sitting in a **vintage** car beside the sea. And I'm sure our listeners had no idea that we're sitting in a car recording this but, thanks to the wonders of modern technology, we can do it mobile. But you have a **vintage** car yourself, a very cute car.
- Sarah: I do.
- Andrew: And could you just quickly tell us about your car, because I thought it was so surprising to see what a cool car you drive.
- Sarah: I hope you took a photograph. Oh, you did take a photograph?
- Andrew: I did take a photograph. I'll put it on our social media for our listeners, yeah.
- Sarah: Well, my little car is a Triumph Herald, and they were very popular in Britain in 1960s. And my car is 53 years old, and I've had her restored. She's a feisty old lady, but she keeps on going.
- Andrew: What's her name?
- Sarah: The car is called Stottie, because the first Triumph Herald I had was bought from Australian friends whose surname was Stott. So I've called all my Triumph Heralds, and this is the third one, I've called them all Stottie. This is Stottie 3, and she's just wonderful. She comes out in the summertime only, because I want to preserve her for as long as possible. Yeah, and I just love my wee car.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's great.
- Well, Sarah, thanks for talking to me today. This was fantastic.
- Sarah: Well, I hope all your listeners have enjoyed me rambling on.
- Andrew: Oh, one thing that I should ask you, just to conclude here, is if you could teach our listeners a phrase or an expression of Scottish English.
- Sarah: Scottish English?
- Andrew: Yeah.

- Sarah: Oh, I was hoping you would say Gaelic.
- Andrew: OK, well, both Gaelic and Scottish English. What's a phrase you could share?
- Sarah: Well, I could say to you in broad Glasgow—and the Glaswegian accent is quite difficult to understand—but if I said, “See ye the morra, Jimmy,” that means, “See you tomorrow, James.”
- Andrew: Oh, James, OK. So Jimmy is James.
- Sarah: Yes. And in Gaelic, if I'm signing off, I would say, “Tìoraidh an-dràsta,” which means, “Goodbye for now.”
- Andrew: “Tìoraidh an-dràsta.” OK.
- Sarah: That's it. “Gle mhath.” That means very good.
- Andrew: “Gle mhath.”
- Sarah: “Gle mhath.” And it's also a name of a whiskey.
- Andrew: OK. Great, thank you.
- Sarah: Bye.
- Andrew: Thanks again to Sarah and Lawrence for touring me around Dunoon, and to Sarah for doing this interview with me.

Guys, if you enjoy listening to Culips, please support us. There are lots of ways you can do that. For example, you could leave us a 5-star rating and review on Apple Podcast or wherever else you get your podcast. Or you could follow us on social media, like our Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter accounts. To do that, just search for Culips English Podcast. Or you could even sign up and become a Culips member, which helps support Culips financially, but it also gives you unlimited access to our study guide library at a very affordable price. So definitely think about doing that, as well. If you'd like to get in touch with us, just send us an email. Our address is contact@Culips.com.

That's it for now. Take care and I'll talk to you soon in the next episode. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Nothing wrong with that Idiom

In this episode, Sarah jokes that when the winter gets too harsh, people from her town head down to Spain. Andrew responds by saying, “**Nothing wrong with that.**” He means that is a good thing. He cannot find anything wrong in what she said.

Here are a couple more examples with **nothing wrong with that**:

Kim:	Did you go to the basketball game last night?
Juliana:	Actually, we planned to go, but the game was sold out.
Kim:	Ah, too bad. So what did you end up doing?
Juliana:	We stayed at home, ate pizza, and watched three movies.
Kim:	Nothing wrong with that.

Arturo:	How was your stay at the Lotus Hotel last week?
Barry:	Pretty good, but it started off a little rocky.
Arturo:	How so?
Barry:	Our room wasn't ready, so we had to wait in the lobby for an hour. But they were so apologetic that they upgraded us to a luxury suite.
Arturo:	No way! There's absolutely nothing wrong with that. I wish that would happen to me more often.

Fringe

Noun

Fringe means something outside of the mainstream. In this episode, Sarah says her town is on the **fringe** of things. She means it is far from the main cities. **Fringe** can also be used as an adjective. For example, **fringe** festivals are well-known gatherings of non-professional performers and generally offer productions that unlike those of mainstream artists.

Here are a couple more examples with **fringe**:

Tyler:	Did you do anything special over the holidays?
Steph:	Yeah, we went camping.
Tyler:	Camping? Wow, I haven't been camping in forever. Where did you go?
Steph:	You wouldn't know it. It's somewhere far up in Northern Ontario. I don't even think it has a name. It's basically on the fringe of human civilization.
Tyler:	Then I'm glad you made it out alive!

Hugo:	Oh, I love this song. Who sings it?
Greta:	Actually, this is a friend of mine.
Hugo:	It's great. Is he well known?
Greta:	A little bit. He's kind of a fringe singer on the R&B scene.

Paternal Adjective

In this episode, Sarah mentions her **paternal** grandparents spoke Gaelic. She is speaking of the grandparents on her father's side. **Paternal** is an adjective relating to a father. Maternal is the equivalent for the mother. Both **paternal** and maternal also have the additional meaning of kindness shown by the parent. For example, saying he is being **paternal** means he is showing the kindness a father would.

Here are a couple more examples with **paternal**:

Leanne:	You need to help me out when we go to your family reunion. I can't remember everyone's names.
Cody:	Sure. Sometimes I can't either!
Leanne:	Is your grandpa Bill going to be there?
Cody:	No, he's my paternal grandfather. This party is for my mom's side of the family.
Leanne:	Oh. You might have to draw me a family tree.

Adonis:	Who is the gentleman in this picture?
Amy:	That's my step-father.
Adonis:	Oh, I didn't know your mother remarried.
Amy:	Yeah. His name is Peter.
Adonis:	He looks friendly.
Amy:	He is. He's always been very paternal towards me. I see him as my father.

In [one's] blood

Idiom

During this episode, Andrew and Sarah often mention blood. Sarah says that Andrew is blood, meaning they are related by DNA. Later, Sarah says that the Gaelic language is **in her blood**. She means that it is part of her culture and heritage. You can also use the expression **in your blood** when something is deeply a part of your life and character. For example, if you are obsessed with baseball, you can say it is **in your blood**, especially if your family is the same way.

Here are a couple more examples with **in [one's] blood**:

Carlos:	Oh my god! This lasagna is amazing. Did you make it?
Rosie:	Yeah, this morning.
Carlos:	How did you learn to make such great lasagna?
Rosie:	Old family recipe. Everyone in my family uses it. I've been making this lasagna since I was a child. It's in my blood .

Maria:	Will your husband be joining us at the barbecue?
Julie:	No, he's out of town. He's on a fishing trip with some friends.
Maria:	Again? It seems like he's always out fishing.
Julie:	Yeah. He started fishing a few years ago. He enjoyed it so much that now it's in his blood . He can't get enough of it.

Right from the word go Idiom

In this episode, Sarah talks about being intrigued **right from the word go** by her grandparents speaking a language other than English. That means right from the start. This intrigued her from a very young age. **Right from the word go** is a fixed expression.

Here are a couple more examples with **right from the word go**:

Sherry:	How's your son doing in taekwondo?
Marlon:	Actually, he quit. He didn't like it too much.
Sherry:	That's too bad.
Marlon:	But he recently took up swimming.
Sherry:	Oh, that's nice. Does he enjoy that?
Marlon:	Right from the word go . He's obsessed. I'm glad he found something that appeals to him.

Dax:	Is everything going all right in your new job?
Jack:	Yes, better than I thought it would.
Dax:	Really? That's great. It's always difficult starting a new job.
Jack:	Yeah. But I got along with everyone right from the word go . They're really friendly.

Vintage Adjective

Vintage is something that is old and no longer made. It is usually of high quality and made to last a long time. Some people use **vintage** to mean antique or old fashioned. This episode was recorded sitting in Sarah's **vintage** car, a Triumph Herald that's 53 years old. You can also say **vintage** when referring to high-quality wines and the year they were produced.

Here are a couple more examples with **vintage**:

Amanda:	Wow! I love your bicycle.
Kelly:	Thanks. It's my baby.
Amanda:	Nice colours. I like the retro style.
Kelly:	This isn't retro at all, it's an original! It's a vintage bicycle from the 1950s. They sure don't make them like this anymore.

Mark:	They showed an old hockey game on television last night.
Ren:	Really? Which one?
Mark:	That famous game from the 1979 playoffs when Guy Lafleur scored in the last minute of the third period.
Ren:	Oh, that's right! I remember that game. That's vintage hockey, right there.
Mark:	I know. Everything is so different now.

Quiz

1. Which of the following is NOT similar to right from the word go?

- a) from the beginning
- b) from the start
- c) from its establishment
- d) from then on

2. Which of the following is your paternal aunt?

- a) your father's aunt
- b) your mother's father's sister
- c) your father's sister
- d) your aunt's father

3. Which language is Sarah currently studying?

- a) English
- b) Gaelic
- c) Korean
- d) Spanish

4. Which of the following does NOT mean nothing wrong with that?

- a) something is not right
- b) it's pretty good
- c) it's a great idea
- d) that's something I like

5. Where was this interview NOT recorded?

- a) in a car
- b) in Dunoon
- c) in England
- d) in Scotland

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. In this episode, you hear Sarah speaking some Gaelic. It's quite different from English, right? Which languages have you heard that sound beautiful to your ears? Funny? Strange? Difficult to pronounce?
2. Who is the most distant relative that you still keep in touch with?
3. What is the oldest car you have ever been in? How was that experience?
4. What is something you're so obsessed with that you can say it is in your blood?
5. Do you own anything you would consider vintage?
6. What are some of the cultural fringe interests you have that your friends don't quite understand?

Quiz Answers

1.d 2.c 3.b 4.a 5.c

Episode credits

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