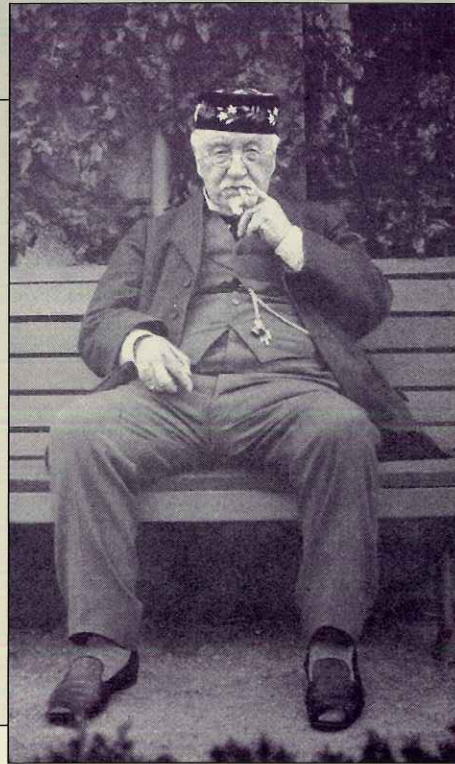


## Publications in the Pipeline

William Walker of Aberdeen (1811-1915),  
c.1905 © City of Aberdeen Library  
and Information Services



**A**long with the two publications of conference proceedings - *After Columba*, *After Calvin* and *The 29th Ballad Conference*, two others are planned.

The first presents the 'Ballads from Glenbuchat', a previously unpublished manuscript in Aberdeen University's Historic Collections. Attributed to the parish minister, Robert Scott, and dated about 1817, it was prepared for publication by the late David Buchan. As well as facsimile reproductions, transcriptions, annotations, and an introduction, the volume will also contain an essay by Professor James Moreira (Director of the North East Archive of the University of Maine) on the socio-cultural context for the manuscript and the ballads it contains.

In the second, *The Bedesman and the Hod-bearer*, Professor Mary Ellen Brown (Director of the Folklore Institute of the University of Indiana) examines the correspondence between Francis James Child and William Walker of Aberdeen, an exchange which offers important insights into Child's methods. When Child's monumental *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898) was published in five volumes, it lacked both a preface and introduction. In fact, his undertaking to elucidate 'the plan and conduct of his work . . . by and by' was overtaken by his death. Child's fascinating epistolary conversation with William Walker helps to bridge this gap in our knowledge.

## International Gathering of Ballad Scholars

**T**he Elphinstone Institute hosted the highly successful 29th conference of the International Ballad Commission (Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore) from 9-15 August 1999 at King's College. Sixty delegates attended with fifteen countries represented. A wide range of topics was covered, from studies of individual ballads such as, 'George Collins' by David Atkinson from London; through studies of song traditions such as Italian 'Tarantismo' by Luisa del Giudice of UCLA, and song communities such as the railroad builders in Scandinavia by Reimund Kvideland of the University of Bergen; to thematic studies such as 'Women's Journeys in Traditional Newfoundland Balladry' by Pauline Greenhill of the University of Winnipeg.

Among the highlights of the week were several memorable performance events, which featured notable local ballad singers, including Elizabeth Stewart, Jock Duncan and Stanley Robertson.

A publication featuring a selection of the papers is planned, under the editorship of conference convenor, Dr Thomas A. McKean, a former research fellow.

## Who's Who at the Elphinstone

**Dr Ian Russell**, Director, *Ethnology, oral traditions, including music, drama and speech*

**Dr Colin Milton**, Associate Director, *Scottish literature and folklore, especially of the North East*

**Mary Anne Alburger**, Peter Hall Research Fellow, *Traditional music, fiddle making, 18th century culture*

**Sheena Blackhall**, Creative Writing Fellow, *Creative writing in Scots*

**Siobhan Tolland**, Ph. D. student researching *Mary Brookesbank of Dundee*

**Sally Atkins**, Secretary

**Honorary Research Fellows**

**Dr Caroline Macafee**, *Scots Language, Scottish National Dictionary Association*

**Professor Bill Nicolaisen**, *Ethnology, folk narrative; name studies, Scottish place names*

## Postscript

If you have any information, comments or suggestions of relevance to the work of the Institute, do not hesitate to contact us.

The Institute relies on outside financial support to make many of its activities possible. If you would like to support us in this way and/or become a Friend of the Elphinstone Institute, please contact the Secretary. Sincerely, **Ian Russell**, November 1999.

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## Elphinstone Public Lectures

**From New Year to Easter, a series of public lectures has been arranged at Marischal Museum, from 7.00-9.00pm, on the following Tuesday evenings:**

**18 January** - Gary West, School of Scottish Studies, *'Pipers without Kilts: The Smallpipes Revival in Scotland'*

**8 February** - Professor Sandy Fenton, National Museums of Scotland, *'Farm Life in the North East'*

**22 February** - Professor Donald Meek, University, *'The Making of Modern Myths: The Titanic and Celtic Christianity'*

**7 March** - Ian Fraser, School of Scottish Studies, *'By the Pendicles for Lorn: Usage, Use, and Misuse in Scottish Place Names'*

**21 March** - Peggy Duesenberry, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, *'James Scott Skinner's Legacy to the Scottish Fiddle Tradition'*

**4 April** - Christine Kydd and Lorna McLaren, Aberdeenshire Traditional Musicians in Residence, *'Tea and Scones with Christine and Lorna: Making Traditional Music Work in Aberdeenshire'*

ELPHINSTONE



INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

1999-2000

**T**he Institute exists to study, record, and promote the cultural traditions and language of communities in the North of Scotland and, in particular, in the North East. Under its new Director, Dr Ian Russell, an imaginative programme of fieldwork, research, outreach, collaborative projects, and publication is being developed. The Institute is also concerned with the cultural traditions of groups that have recently moved into the region as well as Scottish expatriate communities abroad - the so-called Scottish diaspora.

Dr Ian Russell



## Sacred Singing First

**I**an Russell is launching a systematic survey of the traditional culture of the North East. As a first step he is investigating current singing practices in psalmody and hymnody among the religious groups in the region, including the unaccompanied presentment of psalms in the Free Presbyterian Church as well as the Sankey hymn singing tradition of the Baptist and other faiths, particularly in the coastal communities. Any information, contacts or suggestions relating to local singing practices would be warmly welcomed. Other areas he intends to research include the role of free reed instruments (mouthie, melodeon, accordion, harmonium) in the North East, the vigorous tradition of verse recitation, and the work of individual singers.

## Opening Day at 24 High Street

**T**his newsletter is timed to coincide with the official opening of the Elphinstone Institute in its new premises at 24 High Street (the former Sacrist's House) on 17 November 1999. The building is to be opened by Sir Lewis Robertson, Chairman of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. The University warmly acknowledges the generosity of the Trust, whose funding made the refurbishment possible. As part of the opening ceremony, a portrait of the author Jessie Kesson, by Michael Knowles, is being presented to the Institute by the former Chancellor of the University, Sir Kenneth Alexander. During the afternoon and evening (2.00-8.00pm), friends, colleagues, and the curious are welcome to look round the Institute building, meet the staff, and hear about our work. We look forward to seeing you.



Professor Bill Nicolaisen

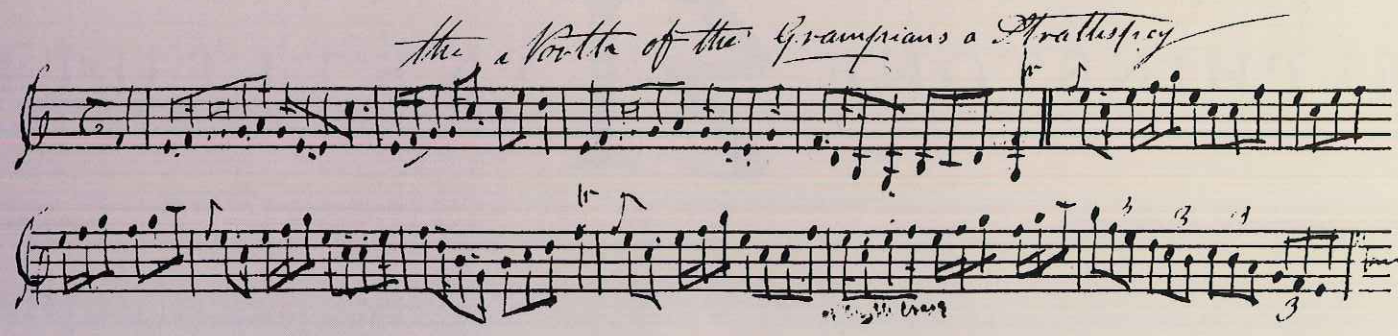
## A Unique Honour

**P**rofessor Bill Nicolaisen, Honorary Fellow of the Institute, has been appointed President of the Folklore Society from 1999 to 2002. He held the Presidency of the American Folklore Society in 1983. He is thus the first person ever to have held both offices. Congratulations, Bill!

## Northern Folk CD-ROM Out

**A** multi-media celebration of North-East Scotland's living culture is about to be published. The interactive CD-ROM, entitled *North East Folk* will be launched at a special event at Baxter's Visitors Centre at Fochabers on Saturday 27 November. Edited by Valentina Bold and Tom McKean, the CD-ROM is the result of two year's intensive development. Copies will be available from the Institute (see leaflet for details); retail distribution is being handled by Highlander Music.





## 'The Captain's Collection'

A music manuscript made by 'James Paterson (1819-1869), Longmanhill, Gamrie, Banffshire', with a strathspey by Simon Fraser of Knockie, M.A. Allburger Collection

Some readers may have heard Mary Anne Alburger's recent contributions to BBC Radio Scotland's 'The Captain's Collection', about editor and fiddler Captain Simon Fraser of Knockie, near Fort Augustus. Mary Anne is looking at possible links between Fraser's published fiddle settings and well known Gaelic poems from the seventeenth century onwards. She is always pleased to examine old manuscripts, music, books and musical instruments relating to the North and North East.

## Spikk, sing, screive it, whyle we myne it Syne the bairnies winna tyne it

### After Columba - After Calvin

The proceedings of the very successful 1997 Elphinstone conference on religious communities and traditions in North-East Scotland will appear shortly. The variety and vigour of the religious life of the area is reflected in the diversity of the essays, which discuss significant figures and movements from St Machar to Bishop Skinner, and from the Celi De to the charismatics. The 200-page volume will be available from the Institute in late November.

### No Sae Lang Syne

Slobhan Tolland's thesis, 'Working Class Culture, Gender and Politics in Twentieth-Century Dundee', aims to consider the relationship between creativity and political expression, looking particularly at the poet, folk singer and political activist, Mary Brooksbank. The use of song and dance as a means of raising consciousness, and strengthening solidarity and resolve, has a long history in working-class politics. Mary's involvement with the Dundee mill lassies and their struggles is part of that tradition, and the thesis will examine how she uses the interaction between the political and the aesthetic to create a new and democratic art.

Many of the duties of the Elphinstone Creative Writing Fellow, Sheena Blackhall, are collaborative and concerned with outreach, and this has been facilitated by strong links with the North East Library Service. In June Sheena took part in an event administered by Scottish Natural Heritage at Forvie, and on 12 September 1999, the Elphinstone Institute liaised with the National Trust to host a day at Drum Castle dedicated to celebrating part of the castle's history through song, play, and story. Sheena's contribution to the event was

threefold, writing lyrics for a new Drum ballad, running a children's workshop, based on a specially written play which the children performed, and giving a reading for the general public.

In October, following on from the poet-politician link initiated by the Scottish Poetry Library, Sheena interviewed Elaine Thomson, MSP for Aberdeen North, who commissioned a poem. Sheena also won the poetry prize during the North East's Doric Festival. Her main work entails visiting schools, encouraging children to sing and speak in Scots, and running creative writing groups in the wider community. Why not get in touch?

## Commemorating Charles Murray

In February 2000, Robert Crawford, one of the best-known of the younger generation of Scottish poets, will deliver the inaugural Charles Murray Memorial Lecture. This will be the first in an annual series in which a distinguished Scottish writer or critic will be invited to speak on the relation between tradition and contemporary writing in Scotland. The Charles Murray Lecture is a joint initiative by the Elphinstone Institute and the Charles Murray Memorial Fund. The lecture will be open to the public, free of charge; details will be announced early in the New Year.

## 'Fit as a Fiddle' - Scottish fiddle workshops open to all

### Festival at Cullerlie

Over the weekend of 21-23 July 2000 the Institute will be supporting a festival of traditional singing at Cullerlie Farm Park, hosted by Tam and Anne Reid. Some of the North East's finest singers will be joined by their counterparts from Orkney, England and Ireland in an informal non-competitive setting. This will be a completely new venture for this part of Scotland.



Photograph by Robert Smith

Tam and Anne Reid

On Saturday 5 February at Marischal College, the Institute presents a day of fiddle workshops introduced by Mary Anne Alburger and featuring acknowledged experts, including James Alexander (ceilidh bands), Paul Anderson (North East style), Edna Arthur (Scots fiddle 'high style'), and Jean-Ann Callender (basic fiddle). The day will culminate in a ceilidh dance hosted by the Elphinstone fiddlers directed by Douglas Haston, which will be introduced by Christine Kydd. The Institute is very grateful to the North East of Scotland Heritage Trust, which has generously provided funding support for the event, which is jointly organised with University Music.

### Conference in May:

### 'The Popular and Traditional Song of North-East Scotland'

An all-day event on Saturday 6 May 2000 will feature description and performance of the rich song culture of the North East from the 18th century to the present day. Ian Olson, 'North-East Scotland: One of the Richest Areas in the World for Ballad and Song', will discuss collectors and their findings from the 18th century to the present day and highlight the University's holdings and activities (such as the publication of the Greig-Duncan and the Glenbuchat Collections). Robbie Shepherd, 'The Concert-Hall and Music-Hall Traditions', will relate, with examples and illustrations, the development of these thriving traditions and the strength of the present day scene. Stanley Robertson, 'The Great Ballads and the Traveller Tradition', will describe and perform examples from the traveller tradition, with emphasis on the great classical story ballads for which the North East is world famous. Finally Charlie Allan, 'The Bothy Ballad Tradition', will illustrate the evolution from the older farm-life songs into the modern lively performance style with songs and verse by such as the late Ian Middleton.



Paul Anderson



© Library of Congress, Washington DC

James Madison Carpenter in Aberdeen c.1930

## Carpenter Collaboration

The collection contains an estimated 700 texts and 850 tunes of the Child ballad canon (some rare and unique), 500 sea songs including sea shanties, 1000 other songs and ballads, 200 children's singing games and nursery rhymes, 300 mummies' plays, a number of folk tales, and information on customs. About

55% of the total material was recorded in North-East Scotland, and this includes most of the ballad material. Not only is the size of the collection impressive, but it bridges the gap between Greig-Duncan (1903-1917) and the 1950s collectors, most notably Hamish Henderson.

The Carpenter Collection was purchased by the Library of Congress in 1972 and microfilm copies of the manuscript materials are held by Aberdeen Public Library and the

Vaughan Williams Memorial Library in London. Significant work on the collection has, however, been hampered by its lack of organisation. The project aims to raise the profile of the collection and to make it widely accessible. This will be achieved by the digitisation of the contents including text, images and sound recordings for worldwide web access, a critical edition of the materials alongside a critical biography of the man, and the publication of articles in refereed academic journals.

Important preliminary research has been undertaken by Dr Julia Bishop of Sheffield University and her findings are published in two articles in the 1998 special issue of *Folk Music Journal*, together with contributions by Ian Olson (Scottish song), David Atkinson (English and Welsh balladry), Robert Walser (sea shanties), and Steve Roud and Paul Smith (folk drama).