

Who's Who at the Elphinstone

Professor Ian Russell, Director, *ethnology, oral traditions, including singing, music-making, drama and speech*

Dr Thomas A. McKean, Deputy Director, archives and research, *ethnology, ballads, beliefs, Gaelic tradition, preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection*

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

Dr Julia C. Bishop, NEH Research Fellow and team leader *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

Dr David Atkinson, NEH Research Fellow, *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

Dr Eddie Cass, NEH Research Fellow, *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

Dr Frances Wilkins, Ethnomusicology, *Sacred Singing in Coastal Communities in North and North-East Scotland and the Northern Isles*

Pat Ballantyne, PhD student, *researching Scottish step dance traditions*

Janet Byth, MLitt Res student, *researching schooling in the Fintry area of Aberdeenshire*

Les Donaldson, PhD student, *researching the Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen*

Jennifer Fagen, PhD student, *researching the landscape of the Garioch*

Ronnie Gibson, PhD student, *researching the relationships between contemporary and eighteenth-century fiddle traditions*

Bee Kerr, PhD student, *researching domestic traditions in the North-East*

Roderick McKenzie, PhD student, *researching Scottish healing wells, their contemporary use and the implications for nursing practice*

Máire Ní Bhaoil, PhD student, *researching traditional singing among children in Ireland*

Guglielmo Perfetti, PhD student, *researching the changing role of music making in the social context of the public house*

Sara Reith, PhD student, *George Reid Studentship, researching the ethnology and folklore of Scottish Travellers*

Irene Watt, PhD student, *researching lullabies*

Carley Williams, PhD student, *researching Intangible Cultural Heritage in the North-East in relation to UNESCO policies*

Sheila Young, PhD student, *researching women's pre-nuptial rituals in northern Scotland*

Alison Sharman, Secretary

Honorary Research Fellows

Dr Mary Anne Alburger, *music and song, fiddle making, eighteenth-century culture*

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

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

Research Associates

Paul Anderson, *North-East fiddle styles and repertoires*

Sheena Blackhall, *Creative writing in Scots*

Dr Elaine Bradtke, *Preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

Dr Katherine Campbell, *Scots fiddle, instrumental and song traditions*

Evelyn Hood, *Scottish traditions of dance*

Dr David Northcroft, *Education in the North-East*

Dr Robert Young Walsler, *Maritime musical traditions, the J. M. Carpenter Collection research team*

Les Wheeler, *Scots language, education*

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 help us in this way and/or become a Friend of the Elphinstone Institute, please contact the Secretary.

IMPORTANT DATES for your DIARY

Ceilidh with Yousedancin? (Friends of the Elphinstone Institute)

21 October 2011, 8.00–12.00 Northern Hotel, tickets £9 (£7 concs.), available from the Institute

Open Night at the Elphinstone Institute

Thursday 10 November 2011, 6.30–9.00pm Elphinstone Institute, MacRobert 040, refreshments

Button Boxes and Moothies: A Free Reed Convention

11–13 November 2011, various venues; see www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone

Traditional Song Forum

25–27 November 2011 Elphinstone Institute, MacRobert 040

Public Lectures 2011/2012

Talks on a variety of topics related to the work of the Institute. Lectures are on Tuesdays at 7.30pm, admission £3.00, including refreshments, MacRobert 055, King's College, University of Aberdeen.

27 September 2011

Title: 'What's the War Got To Do With Us?' – Using Local History in a School's Educational Context' Speaker: David Atherton Institution: Aberdeenshire Council

25 October 2011

Title: 'Lost, Hidden or Just Unnoticed? The Archaeology of Gardens in North-East Scotland' Speaker: Dr Shannon Fraser Institution: National Trust for Scotland

29 November 2011

Title: 'Print for the People in Urban and Rural Scotland 1750 to 1900' Speaker: Professor Ted Cowan Institution: University of Glasgow

24 January 2012

Title: 'Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland: Preservation, Exploitation and Development' Speaker: Professor Alistair McCleery Institution: Edinburgh Napier University

28 February 2012

Title: 'Pantomime in Scotland (tbc)' Speaker: Adam McNaughtan Institution: Traditional Artist in Residence, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

27 March 2012

Title: 'Not Just for Babies: The Power of the Lullaby' Speaker: Irene Watt Institution: Elphinstone Institute

24 April 2012

Title: 'Scots in the Sub-Arctic: Musical Exchanges with the James Bay Cree in Canada' Speaker: Dr Frances Wilkins Institution: University of Aberdeen

29 May 2012

Title: 'The Moray Firth Gansey Project' Speaker: Kathryn Logan Institution: Moray Firth Partnership

Professor Ian Russell!

Ian Russell, Director, was awarded a personal chair this summer in recognition of his research and other wide-ranging achievements. His current research is focused on vernacular performance in the North-East – singing traditions, instrumental traditions (flute bands, free reed instruments, fiddles), Travellers' traditions, monologues/recitations, and local craft skills, notably the building of model sailing luggers, known as 'boatsies'. Among his public roles, he has directed several festivals and convened a number of academic conferences, including the North Atlantic Fiddle Conventions in Aberdeen in 2001, 2006, and 2010, the annual Traditional Singing Weekends at Cullerlie (since 2000), the Festival of Village Carols (since 1994), the Remembering Harlaw conference (June 2011), and the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (September 2011).

Elphinstone Institute Publications

Our publications, including books, CDs and DVDs, are now available at the University's on-line store. Point your browser to www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/publications to purchase *The High-Kilted Muse*, *Crossing Over*, *The Elphinstone Collection*, Stanley Robertson's and Elizabeth Stewart's CDs and a range of other publications on fiddle traditions, songs and ballads, education, and more.

The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, MacRobert Building, King's College, Aberdeen AB24 5UA, Scotland, UK
Tel 01224 272996 • Fax 01224 272728 • Email elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk • Website www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone

L A N G U A G E • T R A D I T I O N • H I S T O R Y

ELPHINSTONE



INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

AUTUMN 2011

Researching, recording, and promoting the cultural traditions of North and North-East Scotland

Wheezin an Squeezin!



The Elphinstone Institute is hosting 'Button Boxes and Moothies' (11–13 November 2011), the third Free Reed Convention, featuring instruments such as mouth organs, concertinas, melodeons, diatonic button accordions, and Jew's harps. The Convention offers a great occasion to enjoy the appealing music of these delightful instruments played by some of the very best talents around, both local to Scotland and from further afield, and it will be a rare opportunity to find out more about these less well-known instruments and their music.

Among the guests are the outstanding Irish box player Brendan Begley of Boys of the Lough fame, Anglo concertina virtuosi Mary Mac Namara from East Clare (pictured) and Roger Digby from London, mouth organ maestros Pip Murphy from Wexford and Donald Black from Argyll, veteran English concertina expert Norman Chalmers from Lanarkshire, melodeon greats Fred Davidson from Banchoy and Liam Robinson from Lincolnshire, Jew's harp expert Michael Wright from Oxford; plus other free reed stars: on moothie – George Current, Ernie Gordon, Bryce

Johnstone, and Dave Lorimer; on button box – Leo McCann and Tom Roche; on melodeon – David Gray and Matt Quinn; and giving talks on various instrumental traditions – Michael Wright, Roger Digby, and Máire O'Keefe.

During the weekend event you can try a taster session, join an elementary workshop, or, if suitably experienced, learn about style and repertoire at a players' workshop. You don't have to be a free reed player to join in; other instruments are welcome at several of the workshops or you can just sit and listen, 'meet the artist', or try an Irish set dance or stepdance. There will also be talks on Friday afternoon and several opportunities for informal sessions in local music-friendly pubs. Full programme details are available at www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone, or telephone 01224 272996. The Convention is supported by Enterprise Music Scotland, the Blue Lamp, the Salvation Army Citadel, the Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, SC&T, TMSA (Aberdeen Branch), the Wood Group, Hohner, Sutherland Trading, Suzuki, and Celtic Chords music shop, Stonehaven.

Ian Russell



Scottish Myths Explored on St Andrew's Day

Scottish identity and history come to life on St Andrew's Day in 'The Construction of Scottish Myths', a day-long series of talks co-sponsored by the Institute and the Centre for the Study of Myth. Presentations include Edward Cowan (Glasgow) on 'The Myth of Freedom in Scottish History', Robert Segal (Aberdeen) on 'Robert the Bruce – Myth, Legend and National Hero', and Murray G. H. Pittock (Glasgow), on 'The Myth of the Jacobite Clans: Ideology and the Construction of "British" History'.

The day will be held on 30 November 2011 at the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, Humanity Manse, 19 College Bounds, University of Aberdeen.

For more information, contact Robert Segal (r.segal@abdn.ac.uk) or Michael Brown (m.brown@abdn.ac.uk). Admission is free, but to book a place please contact Jon Cameron (jon.cameron@abdn.ac.uk).

Thomas A. McKean



Installation of the new Robert the Bruce statue in front of Marischal College, Aberdeen. Photo by Gordon Casely

The Fifth Toulmin Short Story Competition

The Elphinstone Institute is pleased to announce that the fifth annual Toulmin Short Story Competition, with a prize of £500 to the winner, is open for entries. The competition commemorates the work of one of the North-East's finest exponents of written Doric, John Reid, who published under the name David Toulmin. We are pleased to be able to honour John and his work in this way. We welcome the opportunity to give people with a tale to tell another chance to pick up a pen and stretch their imaginations.

The competition is open to all amateur writers* over the age of 16 and the story should be concerned with some aspect of life in North-East Scotland. The story may be written in Scots, including Doric, or English, or a mixture of the two. The winning story will be published in the *Leopard* magazine.

A short story of up to 4,000 words in length should be submitted by 31 March 2012 to Prof. Ian Russell, Director, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, MacRobert Building, King's College, Aberdeen AB24 5UA. Hard copy, size A4, should be sent in addition to an electronic submission in MS Word. For more information contact the Elphinstone Institute on 01224 272996 or at elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk.

*For the purposes of this prize, a professional writer is considered to be one who earns more than 51% of their income through writing, and/or has had a solo work (book) published with a major UK publisher.

L A N G U A G E • T R A D I T I O N • H I S T O R Y



From the Director

We are pleased to welcome four new PhD students – Ronnie Gibson, Bee Kerr, Guglielmo Perfetti, and Carley Williams. Other students, who have joined the MLitt programme, include Richard Bennett, Tracy Boyle, Alistair Mair, and Wibke Reimer. We wish them every success with their studies.

Our conference on 9 July, 'Harlaw Remembered', marking the 600th anniversary of the battle, held in partnership with the Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen, proved a great success. 155 delegates attended the conference which was opened by Lord Provost Peter Stephen. A welcome to Trinity Hall was given by George Ross, the Deacon Convener of the Trades. Presentations included the history and context of the battle (Richard Oram), Archival Evidence (Philip Astley), The West Coast (David Sellar), West-Highland Perspectives (Iain MacDonald), Genealogy (David Irvine), Battlefield Archaeology (Iain Banks), History of the Battle (Neil Cooney), Heraldry (Charles J. Burnett), Harlaw's Musical Legacy (John Purser). The conference was followed in the evening by a special concert featuring Paul Anderson, Elizabeth Stewart, Sheena Blackhall, and Duncan MacGillivray, plus the winner of the SC&T song writing competition, Tom Clelland.

We very much hope that you will support our Public Lecture programme and other events, especially 'Button Boxes and Moothies', our Free Reed Convention on the weekend of 11–13 November, and our Open Evening on Thursday 10 November, 6.00–9.00 pm, when there will be musical entertainment (7.30–8.00 pm) and refreshments.

Our warmest congratulations go to Adam Grydehøj who has successfully completed his PhD, 'Post-Colonial Historiography of Picts, Vikings, Scots, and Fairies and its Influence on Shetland's Twenty-First Century Economic Development'. Adam is currently leading a research initiative, Island Dynamics, which to date has hosted conferences in Shetland and Cyprus. The 3rd Island Dynamics Conference, 7–12 May 2013, will be held in Mariehamn, Åland, Finland (visit www.islanddynamics.org).

Congratulations, too, to Bee Kerr who graduated with an MLitt in July and, finally, more congratulations to the winner of the 2011 Toulmin Prize, Linda Smith, for her short story, 'The Last Een'. She received her prize, a cheque for £500, at the Word Festival in May.

'Taking Part' in Aberdeen

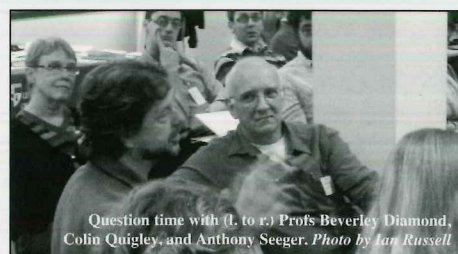
The 27th European Seminar in Ethnomusicology was held in Aberdeen, 15–19 September, hosted by the Institute, with about sixty delegates representing fifteen different countries from four continents. The seminar was founded by eminent ethnomusicologist John Blacking and exists to promote dialogue and understanding among international scholars. This year, the prestigious John Blacking Memorial Lecture was given by Professor Anthony Seeger of UCLA and formerly of Smithsonian Folkways. He addressed the conference theme, 'Taking Part', focusing on the important issue of sequencing of songs and repertory. Forty-three other papers were given over the five days, including a panel of Swedish scholars led by Professor Alf Arvidsson from Umeå University. ESEM President, Dan Lundberg, was one of the five-strong panel exploring 'Conditions of Music-Making', how music is shaped by society's cultural and economic norms and requirements, with particular reference to funding for the arts. Other activities included a presentation by Elizabeth Stewart of Mintlaw of her family ballads and music, and a workshop on Scottish song led by Christine Kydd, one of our MLitt students. The conference excursion took in Royal Deeside, including Crathes Castle and Aboyne, and was followed by a cultural evening at Garlogie Village Hall, which included traditional North-East food, bothy ballads, and cèilidh dancing.

Ewa Dahlig-Turek, Secretary General of ESEM, wrote: 'The conference in Aberdeen was very successful – this refers both to the high quality of presentations and to all the local arrangements, including the unforgettable tour concluded by an equally unforgettable evening party with singing, dancing, and, of course, a delicious meal (vivat HAGGIS!). Thanks go to Ian Russell and the staff from the Elphinstone Institute for all the excellent arrangements and wonderful atmosphere!' Dan Lundberg adds, 'The Institute represents a wonderful blend of theory and practice, which also characterized this year's seminar. The program was packed with exciting and engaging papers.'

Ian Russell



Dan Lundberg taking part in the Swedish Panel 'Conditions of Music-making'. Photo by Ian Russell



Question time with (l. to r.) Profs Beverley Diamond, Colin Quigley, and Anthony Seeger. Photo by Ian Russell

The Institute at the American Folklore Society

Three representatives of the Institute will contribute to the American Folklore Society's Annual Meeting, 12–15 October, in Bloomington, Indiana. For many years, Institute staff and students have made a significant contribution to these meetings, often comprising the largest cohort from a non-North American institution. This year, Ian Russell will be exploring carolling traditions in the Hope Valley area of Derbyshire, part of his decades-long work on Pennine Christmas singing. Robert Young Walser, of the J. M. Carpenter Project, will examine the work songs used by oyster dredgers more than a hundred years ago and Adam Grydehøj will look at beliefs concerning phantom animals in Denmark.

For well over two and a half centuries the performance of distinctive carols has been a feature of the seasonal holiday of Christmas in villages in Derbyshire's Hope Valley. In contrast to the monodic examples recorded by folk song collectors in the early part of the twentieth century, their carols and the manner of performance are wholly dependent on group interaction and characterised by part singing. In "'Peace o'er the World': The Dynamics of a Christmas Carolling Tradition in the Hope Valley', Ian will examine the development of such groups in terms of musicality, belief, sense of place, group structure, community, rootedness, and repertoire.

Walser's paper, 'Cue the Chorus: Improvisation and Response in Scottish Dreg Songs', will look at the work songs, which fell from common use over a century ago, of the oyster fishermen on the Firth of Forth. Cylinder recordings of the songs made by James Madison Carpenter in the 1920s and 1930s offer an intriguing glimpse into the dynamics of improvisation in call and response work song. Dreg songs, unusually for work songs, include variation in both text and melody – to both of which the chorus must respond. Examination of both textual and melodic variation in Carpenter's examples highlights patterns and divergences, reflecting the function and aesthetics of this extremely localized tradition.

Adam's presentation, 'Protective Spirits or Fluffy Agents of Doom?: The Role Transition of Phantom Sheep, Undead Dogs, and Church Pigs in Danish Tradition', will look at the worldwide phenomenon of phantom animals, concentrating on their supernatural characteristics, people's experience of them and their own explanations of these experiences.

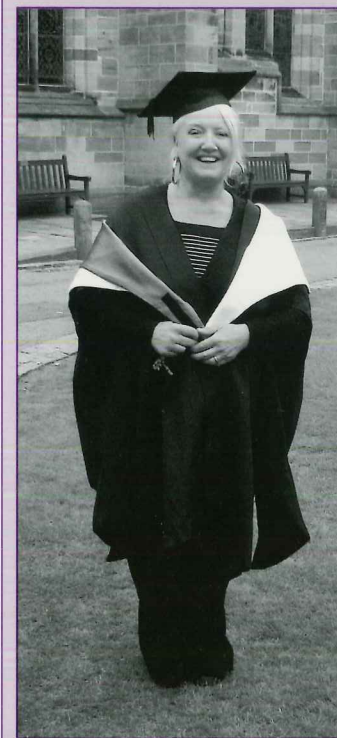
Bloomington is, in many ways, the home of folklore studies in the United States, being the institution with which such giants as Stith Thompson, Richard Dorson, Warren Roberts, Edward D. Ives, Alan Dundes, and Henry Glassie, are associated. We are pleased to be bringing the work of the Institute to this important gathering in such a historically significant place.

Thomas A. McKean

New Postgraduates from Near and Far

We are pleased to welcome four new MLitt students to the Institute. As ever, they bring a rich range of experience and interests which will undoubtedly contribute to lively discussions in seminars and tutorials. Richard Bennett recently completed an MLitt in Creative Writing and is now looking to put his extensive North-East knowledge onto a broader footing. Tracy has served for many years as a correspondent at the Scottish Parliament and she is an active singer of traditional songs. Alistair Mair trained as an engineer, managed Caithness Glass for many years, and served on the University Court for nearly two decades. He continues to undertake alumni and recruitment work for the University. Wibke comes to us from the University of Jena in Germany, where she studied folklore under an old friend of the Institute, Prof. Dr Sabine Wienker-Piepho, a well-known authority on street literature and broadside ballads.

Our new crop of PhD researchers bring a similarly interesting range of experience and interests. Guglielmo Perfetti, from Abruzzo, Italy, will be surveying the relationship between the social role of the pub and its place in vernacular music making throughout the twentieth century. Bee Kerr, one of our recent MLitt graduates, will be researching "'Weemen's Wark"' in North-East Scotland, 1820–2000'. Using socio-historic and ethnological approaches, she



Bee Kerr, MLitt, July 2011. Photo by Mike Trew

will examine the history, traditions, lore, rituals, practices and technical innovations associated with essential household tasks. Carley Williams, another returning MLitt student, will be working on 'Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland: Case Studies in the North-East', a project of great significance to Scottish and UK culture, particularly in relation to our growing international profile and interactions with such bodies as UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Organization. Last, but not least, Ronnie Gibson will be exploring what contemporary Scottish fiddle performance practice reveals about practices of the eighteenth century and, conversely, in what ways eighteenth-century practice informs performance today.

Thomas A. McKean

Diamond Jubilee Didact: Bill Nicolaisen Marks Sixty Years of University Teaching

A diamond jubilee of academic teaching is the extraordinary record notched up by Professor Emeritus Bill Nicolaisen this year. Bill is a world renowned folklorist and place name scholar, who taught his first class in 1951, at the University of Glasgow. Since then, this talented and thoroughly modest scholar has become one of the world's foremost experts in his fields, a career that also takes in forty-five years singing in church choirs and kirk eldership.



What marks Bill out is his trademark humour. He may deliver it with a ready smile, but more often deadpan. Once asked what his greatest achievement is, he replied dolefully, 'I have never been able to teach anyone – only to raise their level of confusion.'

Nicolaisen's academic trail covers universities across the northern hemisphere starting at Kiel, and going by Newcastle, Tübingen, Glasgow, Dublin, Edinburgh, Columbus, OH, and Binghamton, NY, Århus and Aberdeen. In the bygoing, he has enthused many generations of students in language, folklore, literature and cultural history. Though he insists on describing himself as a folklorist (his particular research interests here lie firmly in narrative and balladry), it is in the field of place name study that he has created global impact.

Having nominally retired from the State University of New York in 1992, Bill quickly became involved with the University of Aberdeen, through teaching of course, but also by continuing the publications that have poured from his pen since 1957 – more than 600 articles, essays, addresses and papers. In the process, he has popularized the study of place names without a jot of dumbing down, through an astonishing twenty-three year long monthly contribution to the *Scots Magazine* (from July 1960) and latterly in *Leopard*. He anchors a place name not just in etymological meaning, but to time, space and cultural connection as well as associated narrative.

Born in Halle, Germany, the son of an agricultural professor and the eldest of three brothers, Wilhelm Fritz Hermann Nicolaisen had undertaken his degree thesis at the University of Tübingen on river names of the Bronze Age in Europe when his professor suggested he tackle the same subject in Scotland. This he did, in the course of so doing learning Gaelic and, because of a post-war shortage of books, having to share a Gaelic text book with fellow student Mary ('May') Marshall. He and May have now been married for fifty-three years and have four daughters and a hearty brood of grandchildren.

The 60th anniversary of Scotland's academic gain over Germany's intellectual loss was marked on Bill's eighty-fourth birthday in June this year, when a surprise gathering of colleagues and friends greeted him with a hearty singing of not only 'Happy Birthday', but the German children's song 'Hänschenklein', both accompanied on the bagpipes by one of his students.

Gordon Casely

Traditional Song Forum to Visit Aberdeen

The Traditional Song Forum makes a welcome visit to Aberdeen on 25–27 November. The group meets annually to share news and information about songs and song scholarship around the UK. All are welcome to attend to hear talks on the song traditions of the host region, as well as various projects being developed by TSF members.

In the afternoon, we will have talks on 'The James Madison Carpenter Project', 'Vernacular Performance and Creativity in the North-East of Scotland', 'Lullaby Research', 'A Gaelic Macaronic Song from Easter Ross', 'The Peter A. Hall Collection' and, finally, 'Ballads and Songs of the Fetterangus Stewarts' with Elizabeth Stewart in conversation with Alison McMorland. The Fetterangus Stewarts are one of Scotland's



Photo by Georgia McIntyre

leading families of singers and storytellers. Elizabeth will talk about her family musical traditions – her mother was Jean Stewart, well-known North-East dance band leader, and her aunt, Lucy Stewart, became known internationally for her intimate and direct singing style and rich North-East repertoire. Elizabeth also creates songs and piano music within the tradition, some of which she will be playing for us.

The meeting begins with an informal gathering and song session on the Friday, presentations during the day on Saturday and a ballad excursion on Sunday. Anyone interested in joining the Traditional Song Forum, please contact the Institute.

Thomas A. McKean