

Cullerlie Singing Weekend Nominated for 'Event of the Year'

The 2007 Traditional Singing Weekend at Cullerlie, held in memory of Tom and Anne Reid, was nominated for the prestigious 'Event of the Year' category at the Traditional Music Awards, held at Fort William on 1 November 2007. Competition was very stiff and among the other nominees was the Royal National Mod, which was declared the winner. Twelve of Tom and Anne's family, together with Ian and Norma Russell, attended the ceremony, which proved to be an excellent evening combining tributes and entertainment. Congratulations are due to Sheila Stewart MBE of the famous Blairgowrie Travelling family, who was inducted into the Awards' Hall of Fame. Sheila is to be one of this year's guests at the Cullerlie Weekend, which will be held on the weekend of 25-27 July 2008, where she will also be giving an illustrated talk on her family's remarkable song tradition.



Sheila Stewart



Other outstanding singers have been booked for this year's event, including two others who are from Travelling backgrounds – Jess Smith of Crieff, the well-known storyteller and writer, and Viv Legg from Bodmin in Cornwall, who like Sheila is a member of a singing family, the Orchards. Irish singing will be well represented by Rosie Stewart from County Fermanagh and Oliver Mulligan, who is a member of the London Irish community. Another guest from England is Sam Lee, who works for the English Folk Dance and Song Society promoting traditional singing among young people. Other well-respected singers from Scotland include Jimmy Hutchison from Fife, whose roots are in Gaelic tradition but who sings in Scots, Bill Gray from Peterhead, the 2007 'Champion of Champions' bothy ballad singer at Elgin, Danny Couper, whose support of traditional music in the North-East has been unstinting for over forty years, and Shona Donaldson, a finalist in Young Scottish Traditional Musician of the Year, 2003 and 2004, and BBC Radio 2 Young Folk Awards in 2006.

There will also be the opportunity to take part in workshops, several of which are devoted to traditional crafts, including knitting 'Peterhead Bonnets', basket making with Alex Sutherland, 'drystane dyking' with Dave Bullock, and farmhouse cooking with Shirley Foulkes. There will also be two workshops devoted to singing traditions – 'In the Fermanagh Tradition', with Rosie Stewart, and 'Sharing the Road' with Jess Smith and Viv Legg.

Places can be booked by downloading a form at www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/ or by phoning 01224 645486.

IMPORTANT DATES for your DIARY

Public Lectures Tuesdays at 7.30-9.00pm. Admission £2.00 includes refreshments. Marischal Museum, Marischal College

26th February 2008
Title: 'Scots, Language of Kings'
Speaker: Dr Caroline Macafee
Institution: *Honorary Research Fellow, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen*

25th March 2008
Title: Mrs Anna Brown of Falkland: Ballads and Biography
Speaker: Professor Ruth Perry
Institution: *Massachusetts Institute of Technology*

29th April 2008
Title: 'Robert the Bruce as Mythic Hero'
Speaker: Robert Segal
Institution: *University of Aberdeen*

27th May 2008
Title: 'The Old Ship Zion: Using the Trawler Radio Band to Transmit Gospel Songs among North-East Scottish Fishermen'
Speaker: Frances Wilkins, PhD Researcher
Institution: *Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen*

25-27 July 2008
The Traditional Singing Weekend, Cullerlie

6 November 2008
Institute Open Evening, 5.00-9.00pm
Refreshments & music from Paul Anderson and friends

Who's Who at the Elphinstone

Dr 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, the J. M. Carpenter Collection research team*

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

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

Dr David Atkinson, NEH & BAc Research Fellow, *the J. M. Carpenter Collection research team*

Dr Elaine Bradtke, BAc Research Fellow, *the J. M. Carpenter Collection research team*

Dr Eddie Cass, NEH & BAc Research Fellow, *the J. M. Carpenter Collection research team*

Paul Anderson, AHRC Research Fellow in the Creative and Performing Arts, *Reconnecting today's Scottish traditional musicians with Scotland's North-East traditional fiddle styles and repertoires*

Fiona-Jane Brown, PhD student, *researching Belief in East and West Coast Fishing Communities*

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

Adam Grydehøj, PhD student, *researching Tradition and Cultural Promotion on Shetland*

Sara Reith, PhD student, George Reid Studentship, *researching Ethnology and Folklore of Scottish Travellers*

Irene Watt, PhD student, *researching lullabies*

Frances Wilkins, PhD student, *researching Sacred Singing in Coastal Communities in North and North-East Scotland and the Northern Isles*

Alison Sharman, Secretary

Honorary Research Fellows

Dr Mary Anne Alburger, *music and song, fiddle making, 18th century culture*

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

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

Research Associates
Sheena Blackhall, *Creative writing in Scots*

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

Evelyn Hood, *Scottish traditions of dance*

Dr David Northcroft, *Education in the North East*

Stanley Robertson, *Scottish Travellers*

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.

The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, MacRobert Building, King's College, Aberdeen AB24 5UA Scotland, UK

ELPHINSTONE INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SPRING 2008

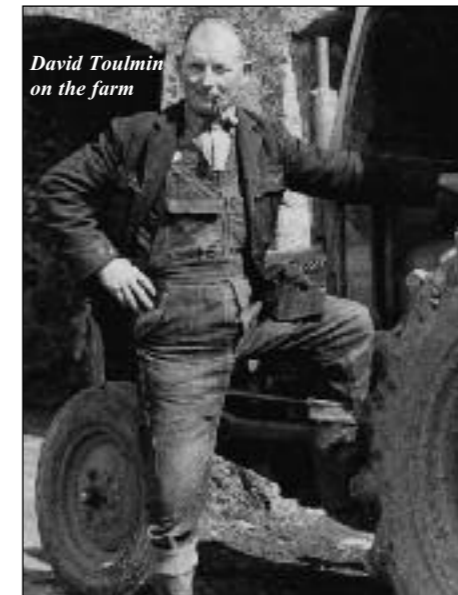
Researching, recording, and promoting the cultural traditions of North and North-East Scotland

The Toulmin Prize

Announcing a Short Story Prize for the North-East

A prize of £500 is to be awarded to the winner of a short story competition set up to commemorate the work of the North-East writer David Toulmin and to encourage creative writing.

The Elphinstone Institute is pleased to announce the launch of a prestigious short story writing competition in memory of David Toulmin, whose given name was John Reid, one of the North-East's finest masters of the genre. John Reid (1913-1998) was an Aberdeenshire farm labourer who spent most of his life in this occupation, working long hours for very small rewards. In odd moments he jotted down short stories, character studies, and bothy tales. Eventually as 'David Toulmin' he had a few articles printed in local newspapers. The first of his ten books was published when he was 59. They consist mostly of short stories and reminiscences, but there is one novel, *Blown Seed*, which offers a harsh picture of farm life. His writing is powerful, evocative and witty, and he is one of the finest exponents of writing in the Doric.



David Toulmin on the farm

A short story of up to 4,000 words in length should be submitted by 31 March 2008 to Dr Ian Russell at the address below. Hard copy, size A4, should be sent in addition to an electronic submission in MS Word. The story should be concerned with some aspect of life in North-East Scotland, and may be written in Scots (including Doric) or English, or a mixture of the two. The competition is open to all amateur writers over the age of 16 (NB for the purposes of this competition, a professional writer is considered to be one who has had a solo work published with a recognised UK publisher). The award will be made at the WORD Festival at the University of Aberdeen, 9-11 May, where the winning story will be read out by a well-known writer. The winning story will also be published in the *Leopard Magazine*.

The services of four experienced judges have been secured - Lindy Cheyne, Paul Dukes, Norman Harper, and Leslie Wheeler.

For further information about the competition and eligibility, as well as submissions, contact Dr Ian Russell, Director, The Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, MacRobert Building, King's College, Aberdeen AB24 5UA. Tel: 01224-272996. email: elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk

Taking Shetland out of the Box

A Conference to Explore Island Cultures and Identity

On 7-10 May 2009, the Elphinstone Institute, the UHI Millennium Institute's Centre for Nordic Studies, and the Shetland Museum and Archives will hold an international, academic conference in Lerwick, Shetland, based at the Shetland Museum and Archives.

Taking Shetland out of the Box: Island Cultures and Shetland Identity will consider Shetland's role as a meeting place for cultures and the influence of these meetings on the formation of local identity. The identities of other island communities and culturally-insular peoples will also be considered. It is anticipated that papers will address calendar customs (especially Shetland festivals), folk belief, legend, music, religion, and comparative insular traditions. Other relevant subject areas include insular nationalism, and cultural influences, including Gaelic, Scottish and Nordic.

The call is out for 20-minute papers to address

the themes of the conference. Contributors are asked to send a title and abstract to the convenor, Adam Grydehøj of the Elphinstone Institute, at shetlandconference@abdn.ac.uk by the deadline, 1 September 2008. The keynote speakers will be the acclaimed Danish writer Carsten Jensen and the eminent Swedish folklorist Bo Almquist.

The conference aims to place Shetland and other geographically and/or culturally insular communities in context through an interdisciplinary exploration of the elements of island identity. It will include studies in folklore, anthropology, history, heritage, geography, and island studies. Although the conference's theme involves Shetland culture, papers are encouraged concerning subjects that are not specific to Shetland but concern island communities (Faroe, Orkney, the Hebrides, Man, Newfoundland, Lofoten, Bornholm,



Clickimin Broch, Lerwick

Svalbard, Channel Islands, Gotland, etc.), culturally-insular peoples (the Sami, Scottish Travellers, French Canadians, Inuit, Swedish Finns, etc.), or North Atlantic history and culture. There is particular interest in papers concerning the interactions of insular peoples with other nations and the formation of insular identity and nationalism. It is anticipated that several presentations will focus on communities other than Shetland.

There will be a conference dinner at the Grand Hotel and an excursion led by Lawrence Tulloch, who is a native of Yell and one of Shetland's best-known storytellers. For further information, see www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/



From the Director

The annual meeting of the American Folklore Society (AFS) at Québec, 17-21 October 2007, proved to be a landmark for the Institute. Nine papers were presented by members of the Institute and a stand was hosted to display the Institute's work and publications. Three papers were given by our PhD students – Frances Wilkins, who discussed 'The Use of Trawler Radio Band to Transmit Gospel Singing among North-East Fisherman'; Sara Reith, who presented 'Traveller Tradition and the Hidden Vitality of an Unseen Landscape'; and Adam Grydehøj, who examined 'Auto Correction in the Retelling of a Danish Legend'. Tom McKean chaired a panel on the J. M. Carpenter Collection with four contributions – David Atkinson, 'Ballad Manuscripts, Textual Reception, and the Condition of Folk Literature'; Elaine Bradtke, 'Two Collectors, One Musician: Different Results'; Eddie Cass, 'The Hunton Versions of the Sword Dance Play'; and Robert Young Walser, 'Boxing Shanties'. Tom McKean's own paper suggested that 'Folklore is Not (Necessarily) about Communication', while my own contribution, 'Between the



Adam Grydehøj presenting his paper at AFS

Sacred and the Secular', looked at vernacular performance in North-East fishing communities. The conference proved to be an excellent gathering both intellectually and socially, and successfully raised the profile of the Institute.

A second conference at which the Institute will be taking a high profile is also in Canada. The North Atlantic Fiddle Convention 2008, 'Crossing Over', is being hosted by Memorial University's Departments of Folklore and Music at St. John's, Newfoundland, directed by Anna

Kearney Guigné. This unique combination of international academic conference, arts festival, and teaching workshops was pioneered and developed in Aberdeen in 2001 and 2006 by the Institute, and has now achieved its full purpose as a convention that moves around the North Atlantic. Three papers are being presented by Institute members – Paul Anderson is examining markers of North-East Scottish fiddle style, Frances Wilkins is exploring the role of the fiddle at sea, and my own paper, which is one of the keynote contributions, reflects on the synergy created by performance and academic meetings, and the vital contribution of the artist-scholar to our understanding of traditions of fiddle music in all their varied manifestations.

The J. M. Carpenter research team, headed by Julia Bishop, are to be the guests of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress when they visit Washington, DC, 19-26 April this year. Amid a busy schedule of cross checking individual items in the collection, members of the team have been invited to give the prestigious annual Botkin Lecture, see <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/events/botkin-lectures.html>.

From Fiona-Jane Brown

A Quest for Memories in Formartine

The Formartine Oral History Project is an initiative of the Formartine Partnership, based in Ellon, Aberdeenshire, begun in 2005 with a £35,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The resulting archive, which now stands at 92 interviews, 22 more than the initial projected total, will be available from March at the Turriff, Ellon, and Oldmeldrum libraries. I took over in October 2006 as project co-ordinator and, since then, I have met with and trained volunteer interviewers from many areas in Formartine, including Turriff, Oldmeldrum, Fyvie, Ellon, Barthol Chapel, Collieston, Newburgh, and Belhelvie.

Interviewees have been diverse and fascinating – Mary Webster, a retired nurse now in her nineties, who recalls attending a Traveller woman who gave birth on the floor of a barn, Jill Deldie, a Turriff Academy pupil whose family have a resident ghost, and former players of Formartine United Junior F.C., including Ally Shewan who went on to play for Aberdeen.

Anyone will be able to listen to the interviews. Some clips are already on the project's website in the form of a podcast. For further



Lewis Cameron, Mary Webster, and Jimmy Dick – the first interviewees for the Formartine Project

information go to <http://formartine.pbwiki.com> or email formartine_project@yahoo.co.uk

The Day I Went To Bangor

From 14-15 January, Bangor University's Welsh Institute for Social and Cultural Affairs (WISCA) held an oral history conference entitled: 'Testimony and Memory:

Interdisciplinary Approaches.' Organised by PhD researcher Michelle Walker and Dr Andrew Edwards, one of the joint directors of WISCA, those of us who attended enjoyed a cosy setting in Bangor's main university Arts building, a mixture of old and new architecture, good catering, and great company. Most were from Wales or the English midlands; I was the only Scot.

The topics ranged from the problems of transcription and the closeness of fieldworkers to their subjects, to actual projects like 'Nurses' Voices' from St George's Hospital, London, and thesis material including the history of 1980s computer technology, landed families of Wales, and perceptions of memory in the Second World War. My paper, 'Master the Tempest Is Raging': Faith, Fear and Folk Narrative among Scottish Fishing Communities', included three stories from Inverallochy, Stornoway, and Scalloway, and considered how cultural background and personal faith, or lack of it, shaped reactions to the supernatural from the nineteenth century to the present day. Oral history approaches are clearly relevant to ethnologists and it is appropriate that links have been forged between the Elphinstone Institute and WISCA.

Hector MacAndrew, a Scots Fiddle Legend

'Everything he played, he played with feeling. After I heard him playing "Auld Robin Gray" I never played it again! His music will live forever.' *Willie Hunter*



As a young fiddler growing up in rural Aberdeenshire, there was a handful of Scots fiddlers who really inspired me. Angus Cameron, Willie Hunter, Aly Bain, and Bill Hardie were a few of them but foremost amongst them was the great Hector MacAndrew, born on the Fyvie Castle Estate in 1903. Although I was too late to receive lessons from Hector (he died in 1980), I was lucky enough to get the next best thing: lessons from Hector's most acclaimed pupil, Douglas Lawrence. Hector's wife Elsie once said, 'Douglas was the only one of Hector's pupils whose playing I couldn't tell from Hector himself.' Even before receiving my monthly lessons from Douglas I was well aware that amongst my peers, Hector MacAndrew's playing was considered to be the benchmark against which all Scots fiddlers should be measured.

Hector came from a family with strong musical traditions; his father Peter, also a fine fiddler, was piper to Lord Leith at Fyvie Castle, where he served as head gardener. His grandfather had been taught the Scots fiddle by James Mackintosh of Dunkeld, the last pupil of Niel Gow. Hector was therefore heir to a fiddle tradition which stretched right back to what is known as the golden age of Scottish fiddle music.

Like many of the great traditional fiddle players, Hector was as at home playing classical music as he was playing Scottish, and he received four years of training from J. H. Alexander of Edinburgh. However, two incidents during the Second World War convinced Hector of the need to keep alive the traditional fiddle music of Scotland: hearing a pipe band practising on an adjacent ship on the way to North Africa and the discovery of a piece of music in packaging outside Tobruk where he was serving with the Royal Artillery. The music was a handwritten copy of the tune 'The Rolling Spey', by James Scott Skinner, published in *The Harp and Claymore* collection.

The highlight of Hector's career came in 1974 when he hosted *Mr Menuhin's Welcome to Blair Castle*, a classic BBC documentary

featuring Menuhin as Hector's pupil in the art of Scots fiddle. Menuhin said of Hector, 'Surely this man Hector must be one of the most beloved of men, for he spoke with the voice of his people', and, 'When I met this man and heard him play, I knew I was in the presence of Scottish history.'

Though Hector recorded several albums and did numerous radio broadcasts (his earliest being in the 1920s for BBC Radio in Aberdeen), they have never been on CD and none are currently available to the general public. I now hope to rectify this situation through the release of an album of Hector MacAndrew playing at his own fireside. In the course of my fellowship I have recorded interviews with a number of North-East fiddlers and one of these players was Florence Lowie (née Burns) of Aberdeen who had a close association with the MacAndrew family and had made reel-to-reel recordings of Hector in 1962. The recordings, which Florence was kind enough to loan to me, are in excellent condition. Moreover, Hector, accompanied by his nephew Sandy Edmonstone on piano is in great form; I've often heard it said that Hector never enjoyed public performance very much but preferred playing informally at his own fire side amongst friends. It should be remembered that this recording was never meant for public consumption and small mistakes, false starts and the clock chiming can be heard at times, but I feel that the natural playing more than makes up for it; it has feeling, exuberance, fire, and character, all qualities found in genuine Scots fiddling.

Florence, Sandy, and Hector's son Pat have all expressed a desire for the recording to be released on CD and I am currently in discussion with a prominent record label who are interested in releasing such a recording in partnership with the Elphinstone Institute. As far as I am concerned it is not before time; the playing of one of our North-East fiddle legends will be heard not just by our local fiddle enthusiasts but by fiddlers the world over.

Paul Anderson