

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

## NAFCo 2010

### Celebrating Appalachian Fiddle, Clogging and Flat-footing

One of the outstanding guests we welcome to the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, 14–18 July, is master fiddler Bruce Molsky. His roots are in traditional American old-time music, especially the music of inspirational Appalachian performers such as Tommy Jarrell of North Carolina, but he also draws on Delta blues, the haunting strains of Irish music and the rhythmically nimble music of Eastern Europe (his forebears emigrated from Poland). Bruce's Rounder CD, *Poor Man's Troubles*, won the 2001 Indie award for Best Traditional Folk Recording and he has been featured on Garrison Keillor's acclaimed *A Prairie Home Companion* radio show. He has also collaborated with Martin Hayes, Alasdair Fraser, Andy Irvine, Liz Carroll, Annbjørg Lien, and many others. He teaches both fiddle and banjo, and will be giving workshops at NAFCo.



Bruce Molsky

NAFCo also celebrates dance associated with fiddle music, and we are delighted to welcome Nic Gareiss from Michigan, whom the *Boston Herald* described as 'the most inventive and expressive step dancer on the scene'. He has studied a broad variety of percussive movement forms from around the world. Starting with tap lessons he was exposed to fiddle music and percussive dance of Appalachian clogging and flat-footing. He has also learnt English clog-dancing and Québécois step dance. In 2007, Nic spent a year at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick. During this period he studied *sean-nós* and Cape Breton step dance with Mats Melin as well as Irish dancing and choreography. He is currently finishing his undergraduate degree in music and anthropology at Central Michigan University and will be presenting a paper at the NAFCo conference. Nic is also an experienced teacher and has taught workshops at Alasdair Fraser's Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddle Camp in California, as well as for Scottish Culture & Traditions in Aberdeen. For further information, see [www.abdn.ac.uk/nafc/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/nafc/).



Nic Gareiss



Mr A. Thorburn, who has been harbour-master at Fishervie Harbour, Musselburgh, for the past 34 years, has retired. He is succeeded by a son, Mr J. H. Thorburn.

Auld Archie.

Photo courtesy of Shona McMillan

## Dreg Songs Come Home

Among the unexpected pleasures of working with the James Madison Carpenter collection are the personal connections with relatives of the singers whom Carpenter recorded. The songs, stories, and people can connect in surprising ways.

One of the most intriguing and least-known traditions represented in the collection is that of the oyster fishers of the Firth of Forth. Known as 'Dreg Songs', these were sung by the oyster dredgers of the Prestonpans, Musselburgh, and Cockenzie areas, who sang them while rowing. Little has been written about these songs apart from a short 1961 article by Francis Collinson in *Scottish Studies*, 5, 'The Oyster Dredging Songs of the Firth of Forth', so I've been asking knowledgeable folks for any leads to information about the tradition. Last summer at the Portsoy Boat

Festival, where I performed and gave a talk on sea shanties, I spoke with Elphinstone MLitt student Christine Kydd who directed me to the recent Greentrax CD (to which she contributed a track) *People and Songs of the Sea*. Christine encouraged me to contact the album's compiler, Shona McMillan. What a thrill to discover that Shona is the great-granddaughter of Archibald Thorburn (Auld Archie), who sang the Dreg Song for Carpenter more than 80 years ago. And what a pleasure to 'return' the song to his descendant via the Internet. A fiddler and singer herself, Shona has a passionate interest in maritime song traditions. In turn, her research for the CD and the related exhibit, her personal family knowledge and her genealogical research will contribute to the Carpenter critical edition project by providing much greater insight into Auld Archie than Carpenter's terse documentation does.

Not only does the team's work provide a rewarding means of connecting people with their own traditions, it also benefits from those connections and enriches our appreciation of Carpenter's long-departed contributors.

*Robert Young Walser*

## NAFCo to be Launched on 29 May

The NAFCo Launch Concert will be on Saturday 29 May at the Lemon Tree, featuring Charlie McKerron and Marc Clement, Paul Anderson, plus other North-East-based fiddlers. Tickets will be available from Aberdeen Box Office from 1 April. <http://www.boxofficeaberdeen.com/>



Charlie McKerron and Marc Clement

# Keynote Speakers Address Conference Theme 'Roots and Routes'

NAFCo's festival is paralleled by an international conference that will bring together scholars and researchers to explore the ways in which local roots have been transformed through transnational routes in the context of countries and communities that border the North Atlantic. Thus to be 'local' is also to be 'global'. Blanket labels such as 'Scottish fiddling' are no longer sufficient. Scholars and performers need to know about lineage, context, and provenance – if it is Orcadian or Border, West Highland or North-East, Shetland or Cape Breton, Appalachian or Québécois. The aim of the conference is to explore our understanding of the interrelatedness of fiddle and dance traditions, and how they are changed and affected by processes of globalisation, to create fresh insights and new perspectives.

Papers will consider a wide range of topics including: fiddle and dance traditions in transformation; performance, place, and identity; centres and peripheries; mediation and cultural tourism; the role of the individual; socialisation and competition; tradition and innovation; dance and music interplay; and new research approaches and methods. The fact that many of our speakers are also accomplished performers is a great strength of the conference.

We welcome as our keynote speakers four leading scholars, who have contributed greatly to our understanding of the field. Dr Liz Doherty lectures in Irish traditional music at the School of Creative Arts in the University of Ulster, based at Magee Campus in the City of Derry. She is Chair of the International Council for Traditional Music (Ireland) and a celebrated fiddler in the Donegal tradition. Her lecture will provide us with 'A Guide to the Roots and Routes of Cape Breton Fiddling', the tradition that she studied for her PhD. She is joined by another Irish scholar whose expertise is in dance.

Dr Catherine Foley directs the MA in Ethnochoreology and the MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick. A performer and a choreographer, she chairs the Dance Research Forum of Ireland and will take us to 'The Roots and Routes of Irish Step Dance: Issues of Identity, Aesthetics and Representation'.

Our speaker from the USA has researched the fiddle both in Texas and in Norway. Chris Goertzen is Professor of Music History in the Department of Music, at the University of Southern Mississippi, in Hattiesburg, and plays the guitar. His concern is style, as he leads us to find the 'Routes to Roots for Texas Contest Fiddlers: Seeking the Aesthetics of Traditional Tunes through Modern Variation Techniques'.

Our final speaker from the island of Gotland in Sweden is Owe Ronström, Professor in Ethnology at Gotland University in Visby. Like his colleagues, he too embodies the artist-scholar paradigm, as a master fiddler and a broadcaster. In his paper he tackles both repertoire and ideology in the 'Routes to the Roots of Swedish Fiddle Music Collections: The Changing Mindscapes of the Past'.

*Ian Russell*



NAFCo keynote speakers

*Clockwise from Left -  
Chris Goertzen,  
Owe Ronström,  
Liz Doherty and  
Catherine Foley  
(photo Maurice  
Gunning)*



## From the Director

Inevitably we are experiencing a very busy and exciting time in the lead-up to the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention this summer, but, of course our other work continues apace.

I am pleased to welcome a new research student, Máire Ní Bhaoill from Dublin, who has commenced her part-time PhD studies. Her field of research is traditional singing among children in Ireland and she is particularly interested in identifying the Scots-Irish component in the North. She is also a fine singer, having been an All-Ireland Champion in both Irish (*sean-nós*) and English Traditional Singing at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann and Oireachtas na Gaeilge during the 1980s. Two of our other research students are very near the completion of their PhD studies, having submitted their dissertations.

Recent PhD graduate, Frances Wilkins, will be lecturing at Rostock University of Music and Theatre, Germany, for a semester, teaching courses on Scottish music, Scottish traditional music by ear, and another on practical fieldwork, the outcome of which will be a public exhibition in March.

Over the past few years we have been offering support and guidance to Alison McMorland, who has been compiling and editing a book, with Elizabeth Stewart, of Elizabeth's memories, stories, and lore of her Traveller family, the Stewarts of Fetterangus. Alison has partnered Elizabeth in this laudable project, 'Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen', presenting Elizabeth's narrative, alongside transcriptions of her ballads, songs, and tunes (some of which are her own compositions). The book will also contain full scholarly apparatus and a fine set of photographs from Elizabeth's family collection. Plans are in hand to publish the book jointly with a major publisher.

Two of my research articles are about to be published. 'Scotland's Traditional Music and Song as Cultural, Social and Economic Assets' in the *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* explores the contribution that the traditional arts makes to contemporary Scotland by using, in part, the methodology developed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage. 'Songs for the Bothy: Re-Creating Realities for a Fictive World' in *Folklore Historian* discusses the history and development of song writing in the bothy idiom, the songs' changing concerns and continuing relevance, from the nineteenth century to the present day.



# Welsh Singer to Feature at Cullerlie 2010

For the first time, a Welsh singer with Caribbean roots will be one of the invited guests at the Traditional Singing Weekend at Cullerlie, held in memory of Tom and Anne Reid, which takes place 23–25 July 2010. Mary-Anne Roberts, who was trained in dance, theatre, and education in Trinidad and Tobago before migrating to Wales in 1988, is a founding member of the Trinidad Tent Theatre and specialises in ritual and traditional folk songs. She also sings with Bragod, performing medieval Welsh music and poetry which will feature at NAFCo.



traditional songs of the Borders. Will Noble was born into a family of stonemasons and farmers in Shepley on the edge of the Yorkshire Pennines. He learnt many of his songs at after-hunt sings, from the legendary Arthur Howard, among others.

Irish singing is also well represented, particularly the singing traditions of Donegal. Kevin Mitchell, who was born in Derry, learnt his songs first-hand from ballad singers such as Corny McDaid, whom he met in Buncrana. He settled in Glasgow in 1969, and has performed in Britain, Ireland, Canada, and the USA. Grace Toland, born and reared in Inishowen, is a passionate supporter of the rich singing tradition of the peninsula. Her songs and style come from time shared with older singers such as Dan McGonigle. She works in the Irish Traditional Music Archive in Dublin.

Our English guests are both from rural backgrounds. David McCracken is a Northumberland hill farmer who works a 2000-acre farm perched on the fells above Kielder Water. He comes from a family that loves the

Scottish singing is also strongly featured through Glaswegian, Ellen Mitchell, Aberdonian, Tom Spiers, Moira Stewart from Turriff, and John Valentine from Cove. It has always been a priority of the festival to feature singers from the Northern Isles, and this year we are pleased to welcome Lise Sinclair of Fair Isle. Musician, poet, crofter and mother of four, she has a strong feel for the dialect of her native isle.

There will be the opportunity to take part in workshops, several of which are devoted to traditional crafts, including Fair Isle knitting, kist making with Iain Milne, flower making with Betty Elgaaen, and farmhouse cooking with Shirley Foulkes. Two other workshops relate to singing traditions – ‘Irish Songs of Emigration’, with our Irish guests, and ‘The Peter Hall Folk Song Collection’ with Tom Spiers. There will also be a talk about Elizabeth Stewart’s forthcoming book of Travellers’ songs and stories of the Fetterangus Stewarts.

**Ian Russell**

For booking and further information see [www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/)

## Books and Recordings Donated by Tom Crawford

Recently, the Institute’s Buchan Library received the generous donation of a considerable number of books and recordings from the library of Thomas (Tom) Crawford, the eminent scholar of eighteenth-century Scottish Literature and author of the ground-breaking classic, *Burns: A Study of the Poems and Songs*.

Crawford served in Atlantic convoys and later in the Mediterranean during World War Two, then emigrated to Auckland with his wife, Jean. At the beginning of their stay, Tom and his uncle John worked as stevedores in Auckland harbour; then, after teaching some history courses offered by the Workers’ Education Association, he started working full time for that organisation. At this point, he entered a part-time degree course in English at the University of Auckland where he was subsequently appointed lecturer and rose to the rank of Associate Professor. After teaching in Edinburgh and Ontario, Crawford was made Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Aberdeen where he became a Reader in due course until he retired as an Honorary Reader in 1982.

His role as an effective academic teacher has been paralleled by his impact as a productive writer which earned him, for example, the recognition in the profession of being ‘an outstanding figure among the first generation of scholars who devoted their entire careers to the study of Scottish literature.’ His major publications include *Society and the Lyric: A Study of Song Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (1979), *Boswell, Burns, and the French Revolution* (1990), and his editorship of *The Correspondence of James Boswell and William Johnson Temple 1756–1795*, Vol. I: 1756–1777, in the multi-volume Research Edition of the *Yale Editions of the Private Papers of James Boswell* (1997).

Crawford leaves his mark on the profession in other ways, too, being active with the Association of University Teachers and as a founder member of the Association of Scottish Literary Studies in 1970.

**W. F. H. Nicolaisen**



Tom Crawford with Stella at Druid’s Gate

## The Toulmin Prize 2010

The Toulmin Prize 2010 is looking for budding writers who can capture the North-East way of life in prose. The winning story will be published in the *Leopard* magazine and will be read aloud at the Word Festival in May, in addition to receiving a £500 prize.

The competition, now in its third year, commemorates the work of one of the North-East’s finest exponents of the short story. John Reid (1913–1998) was an Aberdeenshire farm labourer from Rathen, Buchan, who spent most of his life working long hours for very small rewards. In odd moments he jotted down short stories, character studies, and both 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-years-old. In his later years, he moved to Aberdeen and was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Aberdeen in 1986.

The Toulmin Prize is open to all amateur writers\* over the age of 16. 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. Once again, Lindy Cheyne, Paul Dukes, Norman Harper and Jack Webster will judge the competition.

We are proud to be able to honour John Reid and his work in this way. His writing is powerful, evocative and witty, and he is one of the finest exponents of writing in the Doric. We had an excellent response to the two previous competitions and the standard of entries was high. Prospective writers with a tale to tell are urged to pick up their pens and stretch their imaginations.

A short story of up to 4,000 words in length should be submitted by 31 March, 2010 to Dr Ian Russell, Director, The 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 01224 272996 or at [elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:elphinstone@abdn.ac.uk).

\*Note that 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.

**Ian Russell**





## Traditional Singing among Children in Ireland

I've just joined the Institute as a part-time PhD student, while remaining a full-time lecturer in Irish at St Patrick's College in Dublin. My research will focus on how songs are passed on, collected and taught to primary school children in Irish and English in both Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht areas. I'll be looking at the interchange between Ireland and Scotland to see whether children's songs were part of the repertoire that Irish emigrant labourers took with them after the Ulster plantations. I hope to explore children's attitudes to traditional songs and singing, look at the significance of the contexts in which children 'learn', 'pick up' or 'acquire' traditional songs, and consider the extent to which traditional songs and singing impact children's lives.

I come from a singing family myself, have run singing workshops in Monaghan, Dublin, Donegal and Louth and am an active member of St Patrick's College Traditional Music Group who perform regularly at college sessions and functions. I met Ian following a lecture he gave on both ballads at University College Dublin and was impressed by both the scholarship and his approach to research. I look forward to working with an institution with an international reputation in the field of folklore and ethnology. *Máire Ní Bhaoil*

### 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, 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 & team leader for: *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 Elaine Bradtke**, 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*

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

**Máire Ní Bhaoil**, PhD student, *researching Traditional Singing among Children in Northwest Ireland*

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

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

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

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

**Roddy Mackenzie**, PhD student, *researching healing wells and their contemporary use*

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

**Irene Watt**, PhD student, *researching lullabies*

**Dr Frances Wilkins**, Archive Assistant  
**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**, former AHRC Research Fellow in the Creative and Performing Arts, *North-East Scottish traditional fiddle styles and repertoires*

**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*

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

**Les Wheeler**, *Scots language, education*

### IMPORTANT DATES for your DIARY

#### EVENTS

**Launch Concert, North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, at the Lemon Tree**  
29 May 2010

**North Atlantic Fiddle Convention**  
14-18 July 2010

**Traditional Singing Weekend at Cullerlie**  
23-25 July 2010

**Friends of the Elphinstone Institute Ballad Bus**  
25 September 2010  
'Atween Steenhive an Laurenkirk: Doon the Coast an through the Mearns'

**Open Night - All Welcome**  
11 November 2010, 6-9pm  
Music from the Elphinstone Fiddlers

### PUBLIC LECTURES, SPRING 2010

*Tuesdays at 7.30-9.00pm*  
*Admission £3.00 includes refreshments.*  
Room MR028 (CPD Suite/James Scotland Room),  
MacRobert Building, King's College, University of  
Aberdeen

**30<sup>th</sup> March 2010**  
Title 'Piping Traditions in the Southern Outer Hebrides: An Illustrated Talk'  
Speaker Joshua Dickson  
Institution Head of Scottish Music, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama

**27<sup>th</sup> April 2010**  
Title 'In Search of Traveller Identity'  
Speaker Sara Reith, PhD Researcher  
Institution University of Aberdeen

**25<sup>th</sup> May 2010**  
Title 'Ways of Mind-Walking'  
Speaker Professor Tim Ingold  
Institution University of Aberdeen

#### 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.**

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## Peter Buchan's 'Secret Songs' Published as *The High-Kilted Muse*

Peter Buchan's 'Secret Songs of Silence' will finally see the light of day, edited by Murray Shoolbraid and published jointly by the University Press of Mississippi and the Institute, 178 years after it was presented by its author to a Highland laird. The anthology of convivial and bawdy songs was not available to Francis James Child when he was compiling *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, but the manuscript has long been known and referred to and is owned by the Houghton Library at Harvard. Until now, however, no edition has been available. Along with an introduction, placing the manuscript and its author in context, *The High-Kilted Muse* features seventy-six song texts, full annotations, appendices, lists of motifs and tale types and a glossary. The publication finally brings to light a long-suppressed volume in a thoroughly scholarly edition, which fills a great gap in our record of an important part of North-East and Scottish song tradition.



**Peter Buchan**  
Photo courtesy Arbutnot Museum, Aberdeenshire Heritage