

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

Understanding the Northern Temperament

The Institute is pleased to announce the appointment of a new PhD student, Kristin Borgehed, who will be exploring the vernacular expression of northern identity.

The PhD is part of the University's recently launched cross-disciplinary research theme on The North, intended to place the institution at the forefront of research throughout the northern circumpolar regions. The theme is led by Professor Tim Ingold of the Department of Anthropology and will bring together researchers from a wide range of subjects from archaeology to medicine.

The Elphinstone Institute is a partner in the 'Northern Temperament' theme, which will use ethnographic methods – interviewing, photography, videography – to look at northern identity through cultural performance, the outward expressions of belonging which combine with external cultural influences to create community. The research aims to show how people create the relationships that help them embrace the northern environment and accommodate its harsh extremes.

Through studying vocal performance styles and lexical content, Kristin Borgehed will aim to build a picture of the northern temperament as it is lived and performed, looking at how artistic expression contributes to mood and mindset and, by extension, to the strength and resilience of northern communities. Though a young researcher, Kristin, from Sweden, brings a range of experience to the programme. She achieved a bachelor's degree in Traditional Music and Philosophy, in 2008, and an MA in traditional arts, in 2011, both in Norway, with a dissertation on 'Timbre in Folk Singing: Interpretations of Archive Material and Perspectives on Today's Folk Music Activity'. Since graduating, she has been working full time with folk music and the ideas about singing intonation that she identified in her MA thesis. Together with a colleague, she has started the Folk Practice Academy – a Baltic Sea centre which focuses on research, performing and teaching folk music. She is also a member of Nordisk Forskernetverk for Vokal Folkemusikk, the Nordic Network for Vocal Traditional Music Research and the International Council for Traditional Music.

Kristin is also a practising singer and double bassist who performs regularly throughout Scandinavia, Poland and Estonia, often with Bessman, a vocal quartet which she co-founded. She currently lives in Småland, Sweden, with her family.

We hope that Kristin's research, and the larger theme of The North, will lead to better understandings of northern communities' relationship with their environment, their coping strategies and their remarkable resilience. We look forward to Kristin becoming part of our team and bringing a wider northern perspective to our research portfolio.

Thomas A. McKean



The Elphinstone Institute at the American Folklore Society

A substantial group of Elphinstone staff and students will be attending the American Folklore Society (AFS) annual meeting in New Orleans, LA, 23–27 October 2012. The meeting is the largest gathering of folklorists in the world and the Institute is often very well represented there, punching well above its weight against venerable institutions like Indiana's Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology in Bloomington, home to more than 100 graduate students.

Ian Russell brings NAFCo to AFS to talk about 'The Power of Festival: Bridging the Divide in Derry and Donegal', drawing on the experience of this summer's remarkable event in Ireland. Carley Williams will present a paper on 'Community-Led Policymaking: Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland', focusing on how protecting cultural heritage needs to start at grass-roots level. Irene Watt, drawing on her recently-completed PhD dissertation, will discuss 'The Continuity and Creativity of Culture through the Lullaby'. Tom McKean discusses memoirs, such as Elizabeth Stewart's recent *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, in which Scottish Travellers finally get to tell their own story. Finally, Robert Young Walser, of the Carpenter Project, will present 'Out of the Archive and onto the Firth: Reanimating the Dreg Song' on his extraordinary effort to re-invigorate Scottish Dreg songs. These work songs were formerly used by oyster fishermen on the Firth of Forth and this past summer Walser led two re-creations of their use under oar power, one on the Forth and another offshore at Portsoy, during the Scottish Traditional Boat Festival.

The AFS meetings, attended by more than 600 folklorists from the USA and around the world, offer Institute members an excellent opportunity to broaden their experience and thinking, as well as to meet many of the important scholars on whose work we draw in the MLitt and PhD programmes.

Thomas A. McKean



From the Director

Our series of singing and storytelling workshops for Polish and Scottish people in Aberdeen led by Grace Banks came to a climax on 17 June with a ceilidh at the Blue Lamp which featured traditional dances and songs from both countries. A full house, of which more

than half were from the Polish community, enjoyed dancing to Danse McCabre ceilidh band with caller Helen Lynch and feasted on a delicious range of Polish food, much of which was home-made (our contribution was bigos, a stew of distinctive character cooked over three days for a total of ten hours). During the year, with support from the Polish Consulate in Edinburgh, and the University's cultural funding, in addition to our regular workshops we have welcomed storyteller Michal Malinowski, craft worker and researcher Anna Sznajder, and poet Andrzej Grabowski and his son Arthur, who is an illustrator. For our next special event as part of the Scottish Storytelling Festival, we welcome once again master storyteller Michal Malinowski and Małgorzata Litwinowicz for an evening of Polish Storytelling and Song, on Friday 26 October at 7.00 pm (MacRobert Building, Room 028). For the next academic year, the group plan to meet fortnightly for our workshops on Sundays at 6.00pm at the Institute. Everyone is welcome.

The Institute is pleased to announce that two marriages have taken place over the summer among our research postgraduates. On 21 July, Ronnie Gibson married Victoria McLean at Pembroke Chapel, Oxford, and on 9 September, Irene Watt married Graham White at Pittodrie House Hotel.

The winner of the 2012 Toulmin Prize of £500 was Moira Taylor of Longside with 'Lizzie's Dother'; a copy of her winning short story was published in the summer 2012 issue of the Leopard, with a specially commissioned illustration by Jodi Le Bigre. I am very grateful to our judges – Jack Webster, Lindy Cheyne, Norman Harper and Prof. Paul Dukes. The short story competition in memory of David Toulmin, will run for the sixth consecutive year in 2013, supported by the Leopard magazine and the Scots Language Centre. The competition is open to amateur writers of 16 years and over. Entries should reach the Institute by 31 March 2013 and must be unpublished, of no more than 4,000 words in length, in MS Word format and as A4 typescript (for full competition rules, please consult our website). The winner will be announced on Sunday 12 May 2013 at a special event as part of the University's May Festival. To celebrate the centenary of the birth of David Toulmin, there will also be readings from his works, recollections from those who knew him, and video of the man himself, introduced by Paul Dukes.

A second celebration is planned for the May Festival on Saturday 11 May 2013 in the form of a Day of Song, comprising workshops, talks, and a concert to acknowledge the contribution made by Gavin Greig and Rev. James Bruce Duncan, whose major folksong collection, housed in the University's Historic Collections, was published in eight volumes in conjunction with the University of Edinburgh (1981–2002), and represents Scotland's most extensive historical collection of Scots ballads and songs. The evening concert will be hosted by the well-known broadcaster and traditional singer Frieda Morrison, who has recently been appointed Artist in Residence at the University of Edinburgh.

Ian Russell

North-East Immigrants Tell their Stories

Researching the traditions of the North-East is the essence of the Elphinstone Institute and, in some ways, inabootcomers like myself can face a steep learning curve in adapting to and learning about this corner's unique environment and culture. Unable to connect with the North-East as a local, I feel it is important to research a topic with which I do have a real, visceral connection. Rather than being an immigrant studying locals, it seemed more sensible to me to be an immigrant studying other newcomers to this country. Indeed, in my MLitt dissertation I worked with Polish immigrants to Aberdeen.

For my PhD, I hope to expand this research by talking to North-East immigrants from as many countries as possible. My particular interest is in oral narrative, and how immigrants communicate their interpretation of the North-East's culture and landscape. I am equally curious about how they talk about their native lands and traditions to other immigrants as well as locals. Like the Italian immigrants of past generations, many of today's new arrivals will go on to settle here long-term. The North-East of the future will undoubtedly reflect this, with the myriad traditions and values of its newest citizens being woven into the region's ever more complex cultural tapestry.

It is of utmost importance, I feel, to document and research these first-generation immigrants. Not only will this allow us to better understand how Scotland is viewed from an outsider's perspective, but it will help us contextualize the bi-cultural experience of these immigrants' children. Equally important is reaching out to these various communities to help foster better understanding and appreciation between locals and newcomers. I hope that through this combination of academic study and public outreach, my research will help fulfil the Institute's role in relation to both the people of the North-East and the university.

If anyone has a story to tell, or an interest in my research, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me through the Institute.

Nick Le Bigre

Toulmin 2012 prize winner, Moira Taylor, with Sheena Blackhall and Prof. Ian Russell



Elphinstone Institute Open Evening

Thursday 8 November 2012, 6.00-9.00pm.

Music at 7.00pm with Carol Anderson (fiddle) and Martin Macdonald (guitar), with Michael Perigoe (flute).

All Welcome

A Cross-Border Celebration at NAFCo 2012

After a two year break, the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention took to the road once again this June, with fiddlers, dancers, and academics gathering in Derry/Londonderry and Donegal for a five-day festival of all things fiddle. The NAFCo 2012 team, headed by fiddler Liz Doherty, hosted a star-studded extravaganza, a veritable 'Fiddle Olympics', ranging from gala concerts featuring newly commissioned works to the academic conference; community workshops and international youth camps to exhibitions, session trails, and fiddle bus tours. And to top it all off, an all-night festival club. A dozen 'Ambassadors' were welcomed from Aberdeen, the home base of NAFCo, among them Carol Anderson and Martin Macdonald, Claire White and Frances Wilkins, Pat Ballantyne, Hector Forsyth (SC&T), Paul

Anderson, and Sharon Hassan, with her young fiddlers.

NAFCo was welcomed with open arms by the communities in Derry and Donegal, with every event being well attended. Even in small villages the Convention was a hot topic of conversation. It was inspiring to witness the cross-border co-operation in a region historically starkly divided along sectarian, political, and cultural lines. As Derry prepares to become UK City of Culture in 2013, NAFCo provided an early opportunity to demonstrate they can really put on a show.

The Institute was well represented at the conference with papers delivered by Ian Russell and PhD researchers Carley Williams, Pat Ballantyne, and Ronnie Gibson. At the Millennium Centre, Frances Wilkins curated her acclaimed photographic exhibition of the

Cree fiddlers of James Bay, northern Canada, and gave an introductory talk. The theme of the conference, hosted at the University of Ulster's Magee campus, was *Ón gCos go Cluas* (From Dancing to Listening) and featured papers by eighty participating speakers from all regions of the North Atlantic on topics as diverse as music revival, liberating the melody, archival collections, accompaniment, style and technique, and breaking away from tradition. The conference also featured a discussion forum on the future of NAFCo, which culminated in the adoption of the NAFCo constitution and the appointment of the executive and members of the board. All members expressed great enthusiasm and are looking forward to future events back in Aberdeen, Cape Breton, and beyond.

Carley Williams and Ronnie Gibson



The String Sisters



Tunester from Shelland

This summer saw song lovers from far and wide gather together at Cullerlie Farm Park near Echt for the annual Cullerlie Traditional Singing Weekend in July, now in its twelfth year. As a celebration of the song traditions of Scotland, Ireland and England, the festival pays tribute to its founders, Tom and Anne Reid, who ran the Park for many years, and whose family continues to organise the festival each year in collaboration with the Elphinstone Institute.

This year's festival featured a variety of guests, each drawing on the song traditions of their native areas. As always, the North-East of Scotland was well represented, with the bothy ballad tradition given fine exposition by Joe Aitken of Forfar, and also by special guest Jock Duncan, still going strong at 87 years of age. Jock's spirited renditions of the 'muckle sangs', 'Jean o Bethelnie' and 'The Battle o Harlaw', in particular, thrilled the audience. Local guest, Kate Taylor of

Cullerlie 2012

Garlogie, and the young Fraserburgh singer Natalie Chalmers, gave further evidence of the strength and richness of traditional singing in the North-East, while Orcadian Sarah Jane Gibbon and myself, from Dundee, offered a range of songs from our own native areas.

Always international in both outlook and appeal, the festival regularly welcomes guests from elsewhere in Britain and further afield. This year saw wonderful contributions from retired dairy farmer, Jeff Wesley, who regaled the audience with songs collected in his local area of Whittlebury in Northamptonshire, and from Mike Tickell, whose riveting Border Ballads brought to life the dramatic and turbulent history of his Northumberland home. Two fine guest singers from Ireland brought the very best in traditional Irish song, with Len Graham captivating listeners with songs drawn from his native Ulster, and Nell Ní Chróinín

delighting with her superb séan-nos (old style) singing in the Irish language.

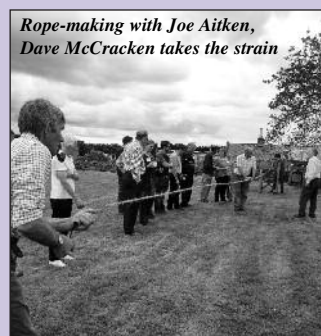
This year's Traditional Singing Weekend also marked the launch of Elizabeth Stewart's long-awaited book, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, telling the story of the Stewarts of Fetterangus – a renowned family of Traveller musicians and singers who number among them some of the most important tradition bearers in the country. Elizabeth gave moving personal recollections of her mother, Jean Stewart, and aunt Lucy, during the launch and acknowledged the great dedication of Alison McMorland, with whom she collaborated to produce the book.

Plans for next year's Traditional Singing Weekend are already being drawn up and details will be published in forthcoming newsletters. Now a fixture in the Scottish and UK singing calendar, next year's edition should be equally rewarding.

Chris Wright



Rug maker, Isabel Gregory



Rope-making with Joe Aitken, Dave McCracken takes the strain



Len Graham leads his workshop on Ulster songs in the Bothy



The Grand Finale – Sarah Walker leads the guests in 'Busk Busk'

Prof. 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 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*

Richard Bennett, MLitt Res student, *researching a Speyside distillery community*

Kristin Borgehed, PhD Student, North Studentship, *researching an Ethnographic Study of Northern Cultural Performance*

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*

Nicolas Le Bigre, PhD Student, Margaret Jones Studentship, *researching the Narratives of Immigrant Experiences*

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*

Sara Reith, PhD student, George Reid Studentship, *researching 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: history, dialectology, sociolinguistics and lexicography; 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 Walser, *Maritime musical traditions, the J. M. Carpenter Collection research team*

Les Wheeler, *Scots language, education*

26 October, 7.00–9.00 pm

Polish Storytelling with Michal Malinowski and Małgorzata Litwinowicz
MacRobert Building, Room 028

8 November 2012, 6.00–9.00 pm

Elphinstone Institute Open Night – All Welcome

Music at 7pm with Carol Anderson (fiddle) and Martin Macdonald (guitar), with Michael Perigoe (flute)

31 March 2013

Closing date for the Toulmin Prize

11 May 2013

A Day of Song, celebrating the *Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection*

12 May 2013

Remembering David Toulmin and the Toulmin Prize

Public Lectures 2012–13

7.30–9.00 pm

Admission £3.00 includes refreshments
Room MR051, MacRobert Building, King's College, University of Aberdeen

30 October 2012

Title: 'Treasures from Tobar an Dualchais/the Kist o Riches'

Speaker: Chris Wright

Tobar an Dualchais/University of Edinburgh

27 November 2012

Title: 'Mrs Brown of Old Aberdeen: The Greatest Ballad Singer of All Time'

Speaker: Sigrid Rieuwerts

University of Mainz/University of Edinburgh

29 January 2013

Title: 'Images of Aberdeen and Elsewhere: Artistic Licence and Half Truths'

Speaker: Michael Lynch

University of Edinburgh

26 February 2013

Title: 'Translating the Bible into Doric'

Speaker: Gordon Hay

Longside

26 March 2013

Title: 'Simple Heraldry, Cheerfully Illustrated'

Speaker: Gordon Casely

Elphinstone Institute

30 April 2013

Title: 'Unravelling Fishermen's Ganseys'

Speaker: Malcolm Smith

Durham University

28 May 2013

Title: 'The Present Time is Oors'

Speaker: Frieda Morrison

Birse, Aboyne



Elizabeth Stewart (author) and Alison McMorland (editor) at the launch at Cullerlie 2012, of *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, Published by University of Mississippi Press in association with Elphinstone Institute.

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 *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, *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.

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.**