

Introduction

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In late July 2009, the ninth Triennial Conference of the Forum for Research on the languages of Scotland and Ulster was held at Orkney College, Kirkwall, Orkney. This was the first time that this conference was held in the Northern Isles (although its success suggests that it will not be the last). Many of the papers presented had the language varieties of the Northern Isles, past and present, as their subject matter. As is normal for our conferences, however, papers on any language varieties spoken presently or in the past in Scotland or the nine counties of Ulster were welcome. It is therefore fitting that this selection of essays derived from the papers should represent both the first and the second set of subjects.

The collection begins with two interlocking essays by distinguished onomasticians, Berit Sandnes and Peder Gammeltoft, dealing with the place names of the Northern Isles (in Sandnes' case, along with Norwegian equivalents), considering them both as evidence for settlement and as a means of demonstrating how speakers of different languages (and from different cultural backgrounds) interacted with their environments. Following this is Michael Barnes' magisterial essay on the study of Norn, demonstrating that ideology, time and place have all had effects on the variety's historians; in particular, scholars dealing with its death. Similar material is presented by Donna Heddle in her discussion of Norse survivals in modern Orcadian dialects. As is often the case with assessing this type of contact, more questions are posed than answered.

Three essays follow concerned primarily with the modern Northern Isles dialects. J.Derrick McClure demonstrates his prowess in the linguistic analysis of poetry, showing how the lexis of these dialects has been employed by various writers from the nineteenth century on. Edit Bugge demonstrates how generational transfer of local dialect vocabulary in Shetland families works. Peter Sundkvist, conversely, discusses the phonology of Lerwick Scottish Standard English. The final Northern Isles paper is by Christine De Luca, illustrating how her native dialect has helped form her work.

Marina Dossena leads the selection of papers not dealing with Northern Isles subjects. Her treatment of the apparent letters and autobiography of a well-known nineteenth century Glaswegian 'worthy', William Cameron, demonstrates both her skill in analysing language in discourse and

the lightness of her touch when faced with partly comic materials. Edna Longley, on the other hand, takes us on a literary and linguistic tour of the 'island' in Scottish and Irish literature which, like Barnes' contribution above, demonstrates how ideology can affect ideas and the ways in which they are expressed. Katharina Mewald continues the theme of discourse in literature by examining linguistic features of both the original novel and later stage adaptation of *Sunset Song*.

John M. Kirk and Jeffrey L. Kallen round up the full-length essays presented in this collection, making connections with many of the ideas, fields and methodologies which have been present in other essays, in their discussion of how Scottish Irish Standard English is. As it turns out, it depends on which type of Irish Standard English is meant, with that written in the northern counties of Ireland inevitably being more Scottish than that used further south. It is striking how many apparently Scottish features are found throughout Ireland, however. The collection ends with a brief note on a major new web resource of use to scholars of both Scots and Gaelic.

In the aftermath of an international conference of this type, there are many people who should be thanked. In the first instance, Donna Heddle proved a fine host, always on hand to help with enquiries of any type, while making sure that the FRLSU and the delegates received value for money. Her staff were perpetually courteous and helpful. All those who attended also helped the conference through their good will and humour. It is important that we should note the contribution made by J.Derrick McClure to this and preceding conferences. Derrick stepped down as Chair of the FRLSU while in Orkney. It is to be hoped that we will continue to see (and more importantly hear) him at many of these events in the future.

As editor of this volume, I would like, as ever, to thank those scholars who willingly reviewed the essays submitted, providing helpful feedback for both the editor and the authors. Both the steering committee of the FRLSU and the Editorial Board of the Publications of the FRLSU have borne the brunt of these tasks. When necessary, however, other scholars also acted as reviewers. Special mention should be given to Michael Barnes, Remco Knooihuizen, Kevin McCafferty and Maggie Scott. Any mistakes in editing this volume are, of course, entirely my own.