

# Boaties Encore!

Five talented young craft-workers completed a model boat-making apprenticeship at Peterhead Maritime Heritage Centre over the summer, which ran in conjunction with the Boaties Craft Residency, organised by the Institute. The residency was the second event of its kind organised by the Institute, the first being in 2004, and it attracted visitors from all over the UK and beyond.

The talents of a team of highly skilled crafts-people from the local area were showcased, including Jim Reid, Alex James Stephen, and Alastair Law, supported by two younger model boat-makers – Peter Fowlie and Philip Stephen. The five junior apprentices were Steven Birkett, Mark Cameron, Andrew Fowlie, Calum Palmer, and Euan Wilson. A further six senior apprentices, aged between 40 and 70-years, also completed the course.

The 2005 Boaties Craft Residency at Peterhead Maritime heritage Centre began in early June and ran until the end of August. The aim was to raise awareness of the fascinating craft of model sailing boat building, as well as to introduce children and young people to the skills of boatie construction.

At a presentation at the Sea Cadet Corp HQ in Peterhead on 5 October, the junior apprentices received from the Director a toolbox, complete with all the tools they will need to continue with their model boat-making, and a commemorative certificate.

The project was supported by Aberdeenshire Arts and Heritage, and the Scottish Arts Council, together with the Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, Willowbank Adult Training Centre at Peterhead, Robertson Road Resource Centre at Fraserburgh, Banff and Buchan College, Shell UK, Peterhead Common Good Fund, Peterhead & District Round Table, and other anonymous donors.

The Director, with the support of Stephen Ritchie, the keyworker for the residency, gave a presentation about the project at the prestigious Scottish Arts Council 'Living Traditions' Craft Conference held at the Birnam Institute, 28-29 September.



## WHO'S WHO AT THE ELPHINSTONE

**Dr Ian Russell**, Director, *Ethnology, oral traditions, including music, drama and speech*  
**Dr Colin Milton**, Associate Director, *Scottish literature and folklore, especially of the North East*  
**Dr Thomas A. McKean**, Archives and Research, *Ethnology, customs and belief, songs and ballads, Gaelic tradition*  
**Dr Julia C. Bishop**, AHRB Research Fellow, *Carpenter Collection, biographies and social world of NE singers*  
**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*  
**Sara Reith**, PhD student, George Reid Studentship, *researching Ethnology and Folklore of Scottish Travellers*  
**Frances Wilkins**, PhD student, *researching Sacred Singing in Coastal Communities in North and North-East Scotland and the Northern Isles*  
**Carley Williams**, NAFCO Convention Assistant  
**Alison Sharman**, Secretary

### Honorary Research Fellows

**Dr Mary Anne Alburger**, *Traditional 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 Northeroft**, *Education in the North East*  
**Stanley Robertson**, *Scottish Travellers*  
**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.

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## Congratulations Are in Order!

Our first two MLitt graduates received their degrees last July. Pictured above with Dr Colin Milton are Hilary Carby-Hall (right), who was awarded the MLitt with Merit for her dissertation on children's imaginative play in the Glenlivet area, and Sara Reith (left), who was awarded the MLitt with Distinction for her dissertation on the North-East virtuoso whistle player, Alex Green.

Congratulations are also due to Siobhan Tolland, who will be graduating in November with a PhD. The subject of her thesis is 'Jist ae Wee Woman': *Dundee, the Communist Party and the Feminisation of Socialism in the Life and Work of Mary Brooksbank*.

## IMPORTANT DATES for your DIARY

### Public Lectures

Tuesdays, 7.30-9.00pm  
Admission £2.00 includes refreshments  
Marischal Museum, Marischal College, Aberdeen

### 25 October 2005

Dr David Robb, University of Dundee, *Perhaps He Will Need to Love Scotland Too: The Importance of MacDonald's Scottish Sources*. (Joint lecture with the George MacDonald Society)

### 22 November 2005

Dr Douglas Young, Aberdeen, *The Centenary of Ian McPherson: A Neglected Scottish Writer*

### 6 December 2005

Professor Donald Meek and Dr Donald William Stewart, University of Edinburgh, *Fakelore or Folklore? Alexander Carmichael, 'Carmina Gadelica' and the Question of Authenticity*

### 24 January 2006

Ian Shepherd, Principal Archaeologist – Aberdeenshire Council, *The Vernacular Roots of Aberdeenshire Architecture*

### 21 February 2006

Dr Lesley Stevenson, RSAMD, *Traditional Music and Tourism in Scotland*

### 21 March 2006

Dr Ian Russell, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, *New Songs in the Bothy: From George Bruce Thomson to Ian Middleton*

### 18 April 2006

Paul Anderson, AHRC Fellow in Creative and Performing Arts, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, *What is North-East Fiddle Style?*

### 23 May 2006

Les Wheeler, Research Associate, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, *The Poetry of North-East Scotland: Beyond the Sentiment*

### Other Events

#### Friday 28 October 2005

The Friends of the Elphinstone Institute Ceilidh, dancing with 'Hallyracker' plus guest spots at Aberdeen City Hotel, Market Street, Aberdeen, 8.00-12.00 midnight. Tickets £8 (£6 conc.) available from the Elphinstone Institute or tel 01224 272996.

#### Tuesday 8 November 2005

Ballad and Story Session with Stanley Robertson, at the Elphinstone Institute, MacRobert Building 7.00-9.00pm.

#### Thursday 10 November 2005

Open Day at the Elphinstone Institute's new premises in the MacRobert Building, King's College 5.00-9.00pm, featuring music from Paul Anderson and guests between 7.00-8.00pm.

ELPHINSTONE



INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

AUTUMN 2005

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

## Paul Anderson Joins the Institute Staff

His mission – to re-connect today's musicians with North-East style and tradition

One of Scotland's finest traditional musicians has taken up an academic position at the Institute to carry out a research project into the future of traditional Scottish music in modern society. Well-known North-East fiddler, Paul Anderson, has been awarded a three-year Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Paul, who lives in Tarland, will begin work in November on a project aimed at exploring the relationship between traditional fiddle styles and those of modern fiddle players.

The research – believed to be the first of its kind in the UK – will investigate the underlying musical 'dialects' of the North-East fiddle tradition. The aim is to create a firm foundation for future creative work and a benchmark for future research. The project will see Paul travel throughout the North-East to introduce Scottish traditional music to new audiences within local communities – and, outside the region, to a wider national and international audience.

Paul is delighted to be awarded the fellowship and is looking forward to developing his interest in traditional Scottish music via an academic route. The project will allow him time to reflect on issues that have interested him for many years. It will also enable him to develop research skills and widen his knowledge base. He comments: 'Scottish traditional music, particularly fiddle music, thrives today with thousands involved at all skill levels. Many younger players in Scotland, however, are unaware of the characteristic, traditional markers of regional Scottish styles and repertoires, and addressing this issue is one of my main aims.'

Paul will reintroduce selected pieces to a new generation of fiddle players and traditional Scottish music audiences and, through the performance of well-known pieces, encourage a greater interest among modern players in the stylistic features and techniques of the unique North-East style. He added: 'The music of the fiddle is an important part of the heritage of North-East Scotland. As yet, no-one has explored the styles of playing or presented new repertoires, either in formal concert settings or at informal gatherings of musicians.'

Paul will employ a variety of research methods during his study,

including an archival study of unpublished music collections and collaboration with older musicians. He will also organise courses and workshops to develop new styles in group performance and will introduce students to music and performance with which many will be unfamiliar. To make this possible, he will have unlimited access to the University's music collections in Historic Collections, including the Scott Skinner Collection.

Paul has been playing the fiddle professionally for seven years (and twenty years as an amateur). He plays solo and in groups, teaches the fiddle and composes new tunes for the instrument. He is the winner of most junior and senior Scottish competitions, and won the prestigious Glennfiddich championship in 1995. His important study will contribute to the existing research of the Institute.

It is a great achievement for Paul and we are truly delighted to have him join the Institute, especially as we will be hosting the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention here in Aberdeen, 26-30 July 2006.



Paul Anderson

## Rum Scum Scoosh!

*Eenie meenie macka racka, Rair roe dominacka, Soominacka noominacka, Rum tum scum scoosh!*

By the time this Newsletter reaches you, the new double CD in our series, Traveller Traditions of North-East Scotland, *Rum Scum Scoosh! Songs and Stories from an Aberdeen Childhood*, by Stanley Robertson will be published. This is an extraordinarily rich compilation, comprising 78 songs and rhymes, together with eight beautifully told stories. The songs and rhymes are grouped under nineteen headings chosen by Stanley; they include Ball Songs, War Songs, Songs of American Influence, Jingles, and Backie Garden Party Songs. The culmination of many



months work, the CDs are accompanied by a booklet with explanatory notes and transcriptions of the words. The CDs are a great resource for anyone interested in childhood, play, and storytelling – whether they are eight or eighty-eight. *Rum Scum Scoosh!* illustrates the lively street and playground culture which helped to nurture Stanley's talents.

## From the Director



Academic year 2005-2006 looks to be our busiest one yet, with new research opening up, new colleagues joining us, new publications coming out, new websites being developed, an exhibition being built, and our largest ever public event taking shape for next summer.

Research developments centre around sacred singing among coastal communities in the North and North-East of Scotland, and the oral and traditional culture of Scottish Travellers in the region. The first of these is being led by myself with the support of Frances Wilkins (the subject will be the focus for her PhD). The Scottish Travellers research draws on the rich resources built up in the Institute by Stanley Robertson during his recent three-year residency. Sara Reith will be drawing on these for her PhD on Traveller Traditions; her studies will be supported by the George Reid Memorial Fund.

Besides Frances, the Institute welcomes Paul Anderson, our new AHRC Research Fellow in the Creative and Performing Arts, and Norman Mackenzie and Kristine Yurek, both joining us for the MLitt. We currently have six students undertaking the programme.

Two ballad collections are ready for publication. The first of these is the long awaited critical edition of the 'Glenbuchat Ballads', written out by the Rev. Robert Scott, parish minister of Glenbuchat, sometime before 1818. The editing of the ballad manuscripts, which are housed in our Historic Collections, was begun by the late Professor David Buchan and was seen through to completion at David's request by Dr James Moreira of the University of Maine. The significance of the manuscripts lies not only in their local provenance and the intrinsic quality of the ballads (many of which are clearly taken down from oral tradition), but in the fact that the collection has not previously been published – and was not known to Professor Francis Child, who compiled the major collection, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, at the end of the nineteenth century.

The second critical edition of ballads and songs, *The High-Kilted Muse: Peter Buchan and his 'Secret Songs of Silence'*, edited by Murray Shoolbraid, is also one that has never previously been published, although its whereabouts at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, has not been a secret. Peter Buchan of Peterhead (1790-1854), with the help of his collector, Jamie Rankin, assembled the collection of risqué songs to rival Burns's *Merry Musings of Caledonia*. It is a rich source of material, demonstrating how significant bawdy songs have been in shaping North-East tradition. Many scholars, including the late Hamish Henderson, have proclaimed the merits of the collection as a major source of oral tradition, worthy of scholarly attention.

A third volume, *Play It Like It Is: Traditional Fiddle and Dance Studies from the North Atlantic*, edited by Mary Anne Alburger and myself, is a collection of academic papers, which started life at the 2001 NAFCo conference in Aberdeen. The volume will be timed to be available for the 2006 convention.

Two new websites are under construction. The first offers a representative sample of the work of Stanley Robertson for our project on the Oral and Cultural Traditions of Scottish Travellers. This will include excerpts of transcriptions, photographs, and audio and video clips. Another website will document the Institute's research on the Boddam 'Boaties' and the craft residencies held in Peterhead Maritime Heritage Centre in 2004 and 2005. It will be paralleled by an exhibition, including models; a video showing the process of construction and the sailing of the boaties will also be available.

Next summer the Institute will host the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, 26-30 July, and we are delighted to acknowledge the expertise of the Scottish Culture and Traditions Association of Aberdeen (SCaT) in this endeavour, together with the support of Aberdeen City Council. We also welcome Carley Williams, who will work as Convention Assistant for this prestigious event.

## Our New PhD Students – At Work and Play

Sara Reith writes...

At the beginning of October 2005 (after completing the MLitt in Ethnology and Folklore), I started a PhD at the Institute on the traditions and cultural identity of the Scottish Travelling People, supported by the George Reid Memorial Fund. Stanley Robertson's presence in the Institute, and working within the Travellers' Project for the last year, have sparked my interest in Traveller culture and in the depth and variety of the traditional lore they have preserved in custom, language, and lifestyle.

Initially, my interest in folklore was motivated by my own involvement in traditional music and song, so I am very much looking forward to studying Traveller lore in greater depth, as I know there are many talented musicians, singers and storytellers among them.

As well as studying, I also play the tin whistle and fiddle (which I teach for SCaT), and am a regular at many local sessions, gigs and folk festivals around the country in the summer. I play in a traditional Scottish and Irish band called Banish Misfortune, but more recently in a Celtic / Reggae band, Paddy Rasta.

Finally, if anyone has any help to offer concerning my research, please contact me at the Institute.



Frances Wilkins writes...

Having spent seven years based on the Shetland Islands and researched Shetland fiddle playing and singing in the Western Isles for my first degree, it is exciting to have been given the opportunity to work towards a PhD with Dr Ian Russell on the Sacred Singing of North-East Scotland project at the Elphinstone Institute. The project will involve the documentation of different forms and styles of sacred singing among fishing communities in the North-East and the Northern Isles, and aims to study in greater depth the role and use of sacred singing in these specific areas.

Before moving to Aberdeen, I studied for a music degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London where I was introduced to an array of different musical cultures and gained experience and understanding of the discipline of Ethnomusicology. Directly before coming to Aberdeen, I spent several months based in Krakow, Poland, where I taught English and absorbed various aspects of the music cultures there.

Outside my studies, I spend much of my time playing and performing music and also love to explore new places. My first instrument is the English Concertina, and I have recently taken up the fiddle. Having only passed through Aberdeen in the past on my way to and from Shetland, it is refreshing to be based in a city where there is so much in the way of musical activity going on: pub sessions, concerts, classes, and ceilidhs. Since moving here, I have been thoroughly enjoying the various musical activities and have started classes at SCaT in Shetland Fiddle and Traditional Song.

## Connecting Cultures THE NORTH ATLANTIC FIDDLE CONVENTION 26-30 July 2006

Following the great success of the first North Atlantic Fiddle Convention in 2001, the Elphinstone Institute will again be celebrating the excellence of traditional fiddlers, fiddle music and dance from countries around the North Atlantic. NAFCo 2006 will combine an international conference with performances and workshops to create an event devoted to *Connecting Cultures* in tradition.

The North-East of Scotland, famous for its fiddle tradition, will be the setting for this event, organized by the Institute in partnership with SCaT (Scottish Culture and Traditions Association), and supported by Aberdeen City Council, in conjunction with other local, national and international arts and cultural organisations.

Through concerts, ceilidhs, workshops and informal sessions, the Convention will highlight the way the fiddle, fiddle music, and associated dance styles transcend boundaries of all kinds – geographical, political, and cultural – creating new traditions and fresh musical insights.

The conference will expand on the theme of *Connecting Cultures*, exploring the role of fiddling, fiddlers, and associated dance, in social, ethnological, and musical contexts, in the past, present, and future. Themes include: the Role of the Fiddler (or Dancer), Musical Interplay with Dance, Socialisation and Competition, Leadership and Transmission, Tradition and Innovation, Cross-Cultural Relationships.

If you would like to be a part of NAFCo 2006, would like to help



Photo: Malcolm Reavell

An impromptu ceilidh at NAFCo 2001 triggered by a fire alarm at Marischal College: Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas lead a scratch band.

with stewarding, or are interested in hosting visiting guests, please contact us at the Elphinstone Institute. Tel: 01224 272996 or Email: [nafco@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:nafco@abdn.ac.uk)

### THE TEAM

Dr Mary Anne Alburger (Honorary Research Fellow)  
Paul Anderson (AHRC Fellow)  
Alison Sharman (Secretary)  
Carley Williams (Convention Assistant)  
Dr Ian Russell (Director)

**We hope to see you there!**

## • A Virtual Tour of Our New Premises •



The Director's office



Where to find Colin Milton



Alison in the reception/main office



Tom McKean in the new archive room



NAFCo Headquarters



Hard at work in the Buchan Library