

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

## Two Prestigious Grants for the Carpenter Project

The James Madison Carpenter project team, based at the Institute and led by Dr Julia C. Bishop, has recently received two outstanding grants to allow the continuation of its work with the Scottish, English and American traditional song, drama, instrumental music, dance, children's folklore, custom, and folktale material collected between 1927–c.1943.

The first of these, in a unique partnership with the American Folklore Society and in close cooperation with the Library of Congress, sees the team awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant of US\$150,000 for the next stage of its preparation of a critical edition of the collection. Drawn from some 14,500 pages of papers, 179 cylinders, 220 12-inch lacquer discs, 600 photographs, and 40 drawings, the critical edition will present the material accurately and consistently, elucidating its content and showing the way in which Carpenter compiled and constructed them as ethnography, while also making clear the modern editors' mediating influence. This phase of the project will see the team complete the preparation of the sea shanties, instrumental music, folk plays and Child ballads. The next phase will take in the remaining genres—lyric songs, bothy songs, songs associated with children, and customs.

Yet another funding success, a Larger Research Grant from the British Academy of £68,666, will allow the six researchers to catalogue the more than two hundred disc recordings in the collection and to undertake comparative work with the cylinder recordings catalogued and transcribed over the last few years. The team will be researching, developing and evaluating a range of techniques for transcription and digital audio restoration, as well as classification and retrieval systems for musical information.

As a whole, the collection is of outstanding importance to scholars, students, and folk arts performers, genealogists, and historians. The critical edition will make it accessible to scholars and enthusiasts around the world.

## Singing Families from the Carpenter Collection

Tradition is usually invisible to those outside its immediate circle of influence. One of the most exciting aspects of the Carpenter material is how the team can build up a picture of the repertoires, families, and communities in which the tireless collector worked. By closely examining repertoires, texts, and Carpenter's brief notes about his contributors, we can begin to work out who is who, where they lived, and their relationship with tradition. This works particularly well for the shanty, folk play, and Scottish song materials where we have a range of materials from each contributor. A prominent example is the Campbell family of the Parish of Forgue, Aberdeenshire, who are listed variously as A. H., A. B., Alexander B., Mrs Alexander B., Hector, Jeannie, Mrs Jessie, and Miss Mary Campbell, resident at Hassiewells, Balgaveny, and Ythanwells. Their range of material is substantial and includes folktales, children's songs, Child ballads, and bothy songs.

One of the most gratifying and productive results of this research work has been making contact with descendents of Carpenter's contributors. In the case of the Campbells, the team have benefited greatly from the assistance of Sandy Campbell of Kingswells, Aberdeen, grandson of Alexander and Jessie, who has clarified many of Carpenter's multiple name forms, family relationship questions, and even contributed recordings of Jessie's and Alexander's son, Hector (Sandy Campbell's father), to the Elphinstone Institute archive. We now know, for instance, that Mrs Jessie, Ann is one and the same as Mrs A. B., Mrs Alexander, and Mrs Jesse and that A. B. Campbell is the same man who published *The Heather-Bells o' Benachie* in 1914. Using the team's catalogue and name authority files, official records and the invaluable first-hand information supplied by Sandy Campbell, we have been able to unite known details of these contributor's lives with their fascinating repertoires.

Tradition is about an individual's regard for their culture and about their relationships with family and community members. The Carpenter collection and the relationships the team is building with local families and communities, combine to give us a unique insight into British Isles culture in the 1930s.



Alexander B. Campbell, 'The Fair Flower of Northumberland', transcribed by Julia C. Bishop from Cylinder 093 00:26



Alexander B. Campbell, Jeannie Campbell, and Jessie Ann Campbell, early 1930s. The James Madison Carpenter Collection, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, AFC 1972/001: PH 145



## From the Director

### Anne Reid (1939-2006)

It is with great sadness that I report the loss of one of the North-East's most steadfast supporters of local culture and traditions, Anne Reid of Cullerlie (widow of Tom 'Tam' Reid, 'the Bothy Ballad King'). Anne was a loyal member of the Institute's Friends and hosted the Traditional Singing Weekend festivals, organised in conjunction with the Institute (2000-2005).

With Tom, she set up a heritage centre at their farm (Nether Woodside) near Echt, which opened in 1993 as Cullerlie Farm Park, featuring an extensive collection of old agricultural implements and machinery alongside rare breeds, together with an excellent tea room. The farm park thrived with practical demonstration days and as a venue for ceilidhs, festivals, and rallies. Any visitor's experience was greatly enhanced by Anne and Tom, who, as fine singers and raconteurs, provided homely entertainment. In fact, the couple were well-known to audiences throughout Scotland and beyond.

When Tom died in January 2003, Anne with her family's support bravely kept up the Farm Park and continued to sing at festivals and gatherings, most notably at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC in July 2003, where she represented Scotland, along with over a hundred other outstanding artists and craftworkers, doing the things she loved best – singing, entertaining bairns, talking about farmlife in the North-East, and giving cookery demonstrations. Despite deteriorating health, Anne continued to work up until the day she died (25 June). She will be greatly missed for her energy and enthusiasm, her knowledge and experience, but above all else for her kindness and friendship. It is her family's wish that Cullerlie Farm Park will continue to operate as a heritage centre.



## In Search of Peter by Paul Anderson

Peter Milne, 'the Tarland minstrel' was born in Kincardine o' Neil, 30 September 1824, though his family moved to Tarland, where he spent his early life. As a boy he was employed as a herd on the nearby Muir o' Gellan. For me as a fiddler, who

grew up in the village and indeed still lives within a couple of miles, Peter Milne and his music has always held a special interest.

He's considered to be one of Scotland's truly great fiddle composers, though he's only known to have written around thirty tunes, however, some of these are amongst the finest in the Scottish fiddle repertoire.

James Scott Skinner said of him: 'I went into the employment of Peter Milne, who, in my opinion, was one of the grandest Strathspey players that ever graced Scotland, and probably the finest native musician of any country in the world.'

Like many a flawed genius before and after him, Peter's last years were tragic. After seeking out a precarious existence teaching and playing at dances in Aberdeen, Peter was disabled by a foolhardy prank, which left him bedridden for the last ten years of his life. He died in the Old Mill Poorhouse on the 11 March 1908 and was buried along with many others in an unmarked pauper's grave.

With Peter Milne's beautiful memorial stone overlooking Tarland's village square, I am reminded of Peter on almost a daily basis. The stone was unveiled on the 20 February 1932 by Lord Aberdeen, to the strains of 'Lochaber No More'. It was paid for by public subscription and as Peter's grave was unknown, it remains his only memorial.

Due to the discovery that I'm very distantly related to Peter, I have over the past four months endeavoured to find his final resting place. It was a fairly arduous task with more than a few dead ends, but finally I found the site. He's buried in lair 14, section 3, in common ground along the south-eastern wall of the Nellfield Cemetery, Great Western Road. Perhaps now a suitable memorial can be erected to commemorate one of Scotland's great composers. Maybe that should be my next endeavour.

## Two New PhD Research Students

### Adam Grydehøj

In October 2006, I gained a BA in Folklore at the Evergreen State College (USA). Despite my university's location, I had lived with my family on the small island of Ærø (Denmark) for the past five years, the last of which was devoted to folklore fieldwork under the guidance of Dr Sam Schragger. My studies on Ærø sought both to gauge the public's present-day knowledge of past supernatural folklore and to analyze the levels and types of beliefs in supernatural experiences held by the island's population today. I was particularly interested in fairy beliefs and, as a result, delved deeply into the history of supernatural folklore in the Medieval and Early Modern eras.

I began my PhD at the Elphinstone Institute in September 2006, studying cultural promotion and the formation of local identity on Shetland. I will research the effects of Shetland's strong movement towards embracing local tradition, try to understand why the local culture providers have chosen to take part in it, and evaluate the historical accuracy of the traditions these providers teach. While not a continuation of my previous work, this study will benefit from my having researched the opposite phenomenon – lack of historical interest in past beliefs – on Ærø. Fairies will no longer be the focus of my studies, but my interest in the subject means that, when analyzing cultural promotion's effects, I will pay special attention to belief in the supernatural.



Adam Grydehøj

### Fiona-Jane Brown

I'm a local quine, brought up in Peterhead from fisher stock. My first degree was in English & History at Aberdeen in 1995, from which I went on to gain a postgraduate diploma in Librarianship at Robert Gordon University the following year. I completed the MLitt in Ethnology & Folklore with distinction in November 2005.

My PhD research will involve making a comparative study of the traditional and orthodox beliefs of fishermen from some North-East and West Coast fishing communities in Scotland. My main concerns are how Christian and non-Christian beliefs work in symbiosis, how these beliefs have shaped fisher identity and how they function in a contemporary setting.

I will also be working with a local oral history project for the next two years, helping five groups in the Formartine area build a permanent record of their past through stories and reminiscence. I am a member of Grampian Association of Storytellers and have told stories as far afield as Newfoundland, where I was invited to perform as part of the 'Doors Open Day' 2006. My involvement in storytelling and oral history should also provide input for my research as the thesis progresses.



Fiona-Jane Brown

# NAFCo 2006 Success!

The North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, Aberdeen, 26-30 July 2006, was the biggest and most high profile undertaking the Institute has organised. In fact, in its composition, scope and range, it was the largest international event of its kind ever held in the UK. It was based on firm foundations with an excellent partner in SCaT (Scottish Culture and Traditions Association of Aberdeen) and a sound funding base, with support from the University, the City of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, the Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, EventScotland, the MacRobert Trust, Culture Ireland, plus several other smaller funders.

The Convention included formal and informal performances, workshops, open jamming sessions, an academic conference, and community events. During the five days there were:

- 7 high profile evening concerts in major city centre and shire venues;
- 12 free lunchtime/afternoon concerts in the Lemon Tree and the Cowdray Hall;
- 3 late night 'soirees';
- 8 lunchtime busking trails around the city centre;
- 72 workshops on the fiddle and other associated instruments;
- 18 dance workshops (from solo stepping to couple dance and dancing in sets);
- 5 dances held, each with a different international focus;
- 3 pubs hosted informal jamming sessions;
- visits to the Children's Hospital and an old people's home in Inverurie;
- 8 conversations with noted fiddle players, dancers, and technicians;
- 2 formal receptions – one from the University, the other from the Lord Provost;
- an academic conference with 4 eminent keynote speakers and 33 academic papers.

The quality of the line-up of artists was on an unprecedented scale and included Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, Aonghas Grant, Paul Anderson, Catriona Macdonald, Jerry Holland, Matt Cranitch, Séamus Creagh, Liz Doherty, Göran Premberg, Annbjørg Lien, Alan Jabbour, Ken Perlman, plus many others. There were also four outstanding keynote speakers – Dr Peter Cooke (SOAS), Professor Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (University of Limerick), Professor Colin Quigley (University of California at Los Angeles), and Dr Alan Jabbour (formerly Library of Congress).

From an organisational point of view it was a major exercise in logistics. The event was administered by three full-time Institute staff, supported by 19 key volunteers, plus 48 stewards, who all received appropriate training. This worked really well and the Convention could not have run without this level of support and enthusiasm.

A book was launched to mark the Convention, representing the cream of the scholarship from the first NAFCo in 2001 – *Play It Like It Is: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic*, eds Ian Russell & Mary Anne Alburger (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, 2006).

Undoubtedly we reached our target audience and there was a clear sense of the NAFCo identity. This effort was rewarded with consistently high turn-outs at all events. Not only did we attract many fiddle aficionados from all over the world but also a general audience who have a deep love of fiddle music, plus many new audience members who were drawn in by the busking, the free concerts, and informal jam sessions. In this respect, Aberdeen with all its fiddle connections was the ideal venue. Our total audience figure is a stunning 13,111, of which 6,711 attended formal events and an estimated 6,400 were reached through informal activities, such as busking.

In general, responses to the NAFCo 2006 events surpassed our own and our advisory committee's highest expectations. The venture in all its scale and scope drew much goodwill from all who participated, which contributed greatly to its success. The future of the Convention is now firmly established with the next NAFCo to be held in St John's, Newfoundland, Canada, hosted by Memorial University, 24-27 July 2008. Our thanks go to all who helped, participated, listened, and funded. It was worth all the effort.



*Arngunn Timenes Bell*



*Jerry Holland*

**'I have never been so near  
to heaven in my life.'**  
*Member of the audience  
at Cowdray Hall*



*Buskers on the Streets of Aberdeen*



*Natalie Haas leads a cello workshop*



*Late Night Dance at the Lemon Tree*

*Photographs courtesy of Jeff Banks*

# Boaties Craft Project

Eight talented young craftworkers completed a model boat-making apprenticeship at Peterhead Maritime Heritage Centre over the summer as part of the Boaties Craft Residency, organised by the Institute. The residency was the third event of its kind organised by the Institute and it attracted visitors from all over the UK and beyond.

The talents of a team of highly skilled volunteer crafts-people from the local area were showcased, including Jim Reid, Alex James Stephen, and Sandy Forbes, supported by young model boat-maker, Philip Stephen, and coordinated by Stephen Ritchie. The junior apprentices were Stuart Daniel, James Clarke, Ashleigh Forman, Lauren Hossack, Teri Hughes, Jonathan McKeown, Kris Robertson, and Craig Westland. A further four senior apprentices, aged between 30 and 70 years, also completed the course.

The 2006 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 6 September, 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, Banff & Buchan Arts Forum, Buchan Field Club, Banff and Buchan College, Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, Lunar Fishing Company, Peterhead Common Good Fund, Shell Exploration & Production, Robertson Road Resource Centre at Fraserburgh, Willowbank Adult Training Centre at Peterhead, and other anonymous donors. There is strong support for a residency in 2007.



Junior Apprentice Teri Hughes



Junior Apprentice Stuart Daniel



Senior Apprentice Maureen with Stephen Ritchie, Coordinator



Junior Apprentice James Clarke



The Presentation - James Clarke, Kris Robertson, standing, Lauren Hossack, Teri Hughes, kneeling

## Who's Who at the Elphinstone

**Dr Ian Russell**, Director, *ethnology, oral traditions, including singing, music-making, drama and speech*  
**Dr Colin Milton**, Associate Director, Hon., *Scottish literature and folklore, especially of the North East*  
**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 Julia C. Bishop**, NEH & BAC Research Fellow, *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

**Dr David Atkinson**, NEH & BAC Research Fellow, *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

**Dr Elaine Bradtke**, BAC Research Fellow, *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

**Dr Eddie Cass**, NEH & BAC Research Fellow, *preparing a critical edition of the J. M. Carpenter Collection of traditional song and drama*

**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 NE Scotland, and the Northern Isles*

**Fiona-Jane Brown**, PhD student, *researching belief in east and west coast fishing communities*

**Adam Grydehøj**, PhD student, *researching tradition and cultural promotion on Shetland*

**Alison Sharman**, Secretary

### HONORARY RESEARCH FELLOWS

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

**Dr Caroline Macafee**, *Scots Language, Scottish Language Dictionaries*

**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*

**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.

## Important Dates for your Diary

### Public Lectures

**Tuesday 7.30-9.00pm**

**Admission £2.00 includes refreshments**

**Marischal Museum, Marischal College, Aberdeen**

**26 September 2006**

*Title: 'George Riddell: Fiddler and Collector'*

Speaker: Dr Katherine Campbell

Institution: Celtic & Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

**31 October 2006**

*Title: 'Hamish Henderson: From the Bridge of Cally to the Bridge of Don'*

Speaker: Timothy Neat

Institution: Writer and film-maker [independent scholar]

**28 November 2006**

*Title: 'Dream beuks and rare auld ballants: Folklore and Folklife in the Poems of Charles Murray'*

Speaker: Dr Colin Milton

Institution: Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen

### CHANGE OF VENUE TO NEW KING'S 1

**30 January 2007**

*Title: 'The Concert Party Tradition of North-East Scotland: Understanding the Experience of Vernacular Performance'*

Speaker: Dr Ian Russell

Institution: Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen

**27 February 2007**

*Title: 'Putting the Dirt Back In: Percussive Step Dancing in Scotland since 1990'*

Speaker: Mats Melin

Institution: Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick

**27 March 2007**

*Title: 'Looking Back on Fisherfolk'*

Speaker: Professor Jane Nadel-Klein

Institution: Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut

**17 April 2007**

*Title: 'From Westminster to Nashville: The Unlikely Journey of the Psalms'*

Speakers: Rev. Dr. Robin Hill & Very Rev. Colin Williamson

Institution: Independent Scholars

**29 May 2007**

*Title: 'Niel Gow's Lament for the Death of his 2nd Wife: The Changing Performance Style of Slow Airs since the Early 19th Century'*

Speaker: Iain Fraser

Institution: Scottish Borders Council Education Department

Department

### OTHER EVENTS

**Thursday 9 November 2006**

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

**Wednesday 15 November 2006**

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

**Friday 23 March 2007**

Traveller Day, Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen.