

Who's Who at the Elphinstone

Prof. Ian Russell, Director, *ethnology, oral traditions, including singing, music-making, drama and speech*

Dr Thomas A. McKean, Deputy Director, *ethnology, archives, ballads, beliefs, Gaelic tradition, preparing a critical edition of the J.M. Carpenter Collection*

Dr Frances Wilkins, Lecturer (part-time), *ethnomusicology, ethnology, sacred singing in coastal communities, Scottish fiddle traditions in northern Canada*

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*

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*

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

Ronnie Gibson, PhD student, *researching the relationships between contemporary and eighteenth-century fiddle traditions*

Amy Hoff, PhD student, *researching the use of Scottish folklore in television and tourism*

Bee Kerr, PhD student, *researching changing patterns of women's work in the North-East*

Nicolas Le Bigre, PhD Student, *Margaret Jones Studentship, researching narratives of immigrant experience*

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*

Carley Williams, PhD student, *researching the North-East's intangible cultural heritage 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*

The Toulmin Prize Competition for short story writing, with a prize of £500 to the winner, is open for entries until 31 March 2014. The prize commemorates the work of the celebrated North-East writer, David Toulmin and aims to encourage creative writing. A short story of up to 4,000 words should be submitted to the Institute by 31 March, marked 'Toulmin Prize'. Each submission must be made in hard copy as an A4 typescript and as an electronic file in MS Word. The story should be concerned with some aspect of life in North-East Scotland, and may be written in Scots (including the Doric) or English, or a mixture of the two. The competition is open to all amateur writers over the age of 16 years. (NB For the purposes of the competition a professional writer is considered to be one who has had a solo work published with a recognised UK publisher or earns 51% of his/her income from writing.)

Elphinstone Institute Publications

Our publications, including books, CDs and DVDs, are available at the University's on-line store. Point your browser to www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone/publications, to purchase *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.

IMPORTANT DATES for your DIARY

13 October, and 3 November 2013
Polish/Scottish Traditional Singing Group

7 November 2013
Open night, 6–9pm, with entertainment from the Polish-Scottish Song and Story Group, and piper Ian Kinnear

17 November, and 1 December 2013
Polish/Scottish Traditional Singing Group

31 March 2014
Closing date for the Toulmin Prize

9–11 May 2014
Elphinstone Institute events at the University's May Festival

11 May 2014
Toulmin Prize celebration with readings

25–27 July 2014
Cullerlie Traditional Singing Weekend

20 September 2014
Friends of the Elphinstone Institute Ballad Bus

Public Lectures 2013–14
Tuesdays at 7.30–9.00pm Admission £3.00 includes refreshments
Room MR051, MacRobert Building, King's College, University of Aberdeen

24 Sept 2013
Title: 'Portsoy's Scottish Traditional Boat Festival'
Speakers: Roger Goodyear and Lorna Summers
Institution: Chairman, Scottish Traditional Boat Festival

29 Oct 2013
Title: 'Voicing Place: The Folk Voice in Modern Scotland'
Speaker: Gary West
Institution: Dept. of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh

26 Nov 2013
Title: 'The Power of the Fiddle'
Speaker: James Alexander
Institution: Fochabers Fiddlers

21 Jan 2014
Title: 'Glaschu: Gaelic Songs from the Glasgow Gà idhealtachd'
Speaker: Mary Ann Kennedy
Institution: Musician-in-Residence, Sabhal Mò r Ostaig, University of the Highlands and Islands

25 Feb 2014
Title: 'Scots Herring Girls, 1900–1950: Oral History and Visual Narrative'
Speaker: Jill de Fresnes
Institution: RCAHMS

25 Mar 2014
Title: 'The "mouth" of the River Don: Metaphor in Names and Language'
Speaker: Carole Hough
Institution: University of Glasgow

29 Apr 2014
Title: 'What is an "Urban Legend"?'
Speaker: Sandy Hobbs
Institution: University of the West of Scotland

27 May 2014
Title: Special Event, 'The Turra Coo Centenary'
Speaker: Graeme Cruickshank
Institution: Independent Researcher

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.**

ELPHINSTONE



INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

AUTUMN 2013

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

The Sounds of the Sub-Arctic Come to the Institute and Northern Scotland

James Cheechoo, of James Bay, Canada, visited Aberdeen from 13–20 May 2013 on an exciting one-off visit to meet musicians and give performances and a workshop on the James Bay fiddle tradition and its historical connections with Scotland. This was part of a two-week Scottish tour funded by grants from Aberdeen City Council's 'Vibrant Aberdeen' programme and the 'North' Research group at the University.

James, who travelled over with his wife, Daisy, and daughters, Treena and Rita, visited the Institute for an afternoon of music and song with staff and students. He also gave performances, accompanied by Daisy and Treena on wooden spoons and drum, at the Blue Lamp and the Cowdray Hall. At the university, he led a fascinating workshop on James Bay fiddle music and dancing which was attended by Institute staff and students, among others, funded by the Friends of the Elphinstone Institute.

Now in his eighties, James is the last person in James Bay to perform a repertoire of fiddle tunes originally believed to have been learnt from Scots fur traders who travelled to the region from the late 1600s with the Hudson's Bay Company. He is a member of the Moose Cree First Nation, a reservation community located on the old island settlement of Moose Factory in Northern Ontario and one of the oldest settlements in the region. The island is situated on the Moose River just off the coast of James Bay which is at the southern end of Hudson Bay; the settlement dates back to



Daisy and James Cheechoo at the Blue Lamp, Aberdeen, 15 May 2013

the 1670s when it was established as a major fur trade outpost for the Hudson's Bay Company.

The family, whose first language is Cree, has travelled to numerous festivals showcasing the Cree fiddle style, the most recent of which was the American Fiddles Tunes Conference at Port Townsend, Washington. Their visit to Scotland was a very special occasion as it was a one-off opportunity for them to take their music, and themselves, outside North America. While they were in Scotland, they gave performances at the Breakish Hall on the Isle of Skye and at the Orkney Folk Festival in conjunction with the 200 year anniversary of the explorer John Rae's birth. They were also interviewed by Bruce MacGregor for BBC Radio Scotland's 'Travelling Folk', and for BBC Radio Orkney.

The Institute was proud to be part of this rare bit of history. We wish the family well and thank them for their unique contribution to Scotland's musical life and historical legacy. *Frances Wilkins*

Young Travellers Connect with their Heritage

Time Travelling is a new project for young Travellers, and their community at Clinterty, exploring Scottish Traveller history and heritage. Young Travellers will have the opportunity to take part in a series of research trips, talks and creative workshops, working towards a creative, heritage-based output. The young people will explore heritage in creative ways, perhaps through film or photography, and will tell a different story about Scottish Travelling life past and present than that which is often seen in the mainstream media. In a previous project on the site, the young people explored simple book making and the use of libraries and the internet to research Traveller culture.

The project is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and coordinated by partners including the Elphinstone Institute, the Creative Learning Team at Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Regional Equalities Council and Aberdeen Library & Information Services.

Nicole Gildea





From the Director

Once again we start a very busy academic year and I'm very pleased to welcome our new MLitt students: full-time –

Anthanasios Barmapalexis (Greece), Sian Burke (UK), Jessica Doble (USA), Thitiphat Jaroonchaikuljaroen (Thailand), and Catherine Somerville (USA); and part-time David Francis (UK), and Ian Kinnear (UK). We also welcome a new part-time PhD student, Bee Kerr, who will be researching changing patterns of women's work in the North-East.

In September we had a visiting scholar join us, Professor Graham Seal of Curtin University in Perth, who is Director of the Australia-Asia-Pacific-Institute of Research and Graduate Studies. A number of ideas for future cooperation were discussed around the theme of the Scottish diaspora. Henrique Drach also joins us as a visiting scholar (see article). In February, we are hosting a group of lecturers, graduate students and undergraduates from Japan, led by Professor Keiko Wells of Ritsumeikan University, who are interested in oral traditions and vernacular culture, including ballads.

This will be the last time I will be writing as the Director, as I will be retiring at the end of January next year. I joined the University and took on the Directorship of the Elphinstone Institute in September 1999 and, without question, it has been a very special time, chock-full of exciting developments and so many rewarding experiences. Over the fourteen years it's been a great privilege to see the Institute grow and to meet and work with so many wonderful people who support the language, culture and traditions of the North-East. It's always been a team effort, Tom McKean, Deputy Director, and me, most ably supported by Alison Sharman, our secretary, taking on the many challenges. Our students and researchers – Paul Anderson, the late Stanley Robertson, Sheena Blackhall, Dr Katherine Campbell, and the Carpenter team, Drs Julia Bishop, David Atkinson, Eddie Cass, Elaine Bradtke, and Bob Walser – have been a great strength and conducted research of international significance. I am hugely grateful to our honorary research staff, especially Professor Emeritus Bill Nicolaisen, and to the Friends of the Institute, so ably led by Robbie Shepherd, Jenny Shirreffs, Barbara-Ann Burnett, David Northcroft and John Ledger, who have been so supportive and helped to raise many thousands of pounds to help the Institute further its work. And I haven't forgotten the 'high heidyins', Chancellors, Principals, Vice Principals, Heads of College and of School who have enabled the Institute to flourish and achieve the promise of the University's Quincentenary Appeal. Thank you to everyone including friends, colleagues, donors, and partner organisations, all of whom have been such an important part of this great chapter in the Institute's history.

Ian Russell

Ethnomusicologist Frances Wilkins joins the Institute

Frances Wilkins was appointed this spring as part-time Lecturer in Ethnomusicology, a five-year post funded by a generous bequest from the late Margaret Jones. Frances completed her PhD on coastal sacred singing traditions in 2009 and has since expanded her research to include Scottish and North American fiddle music, English concertina performance traditions, and traditional music education and transmission. She has conducted extensive field-based research into Scottish musical traditions, and since 2011 has been investigating the historical connections between Scottish and Cree fiddle music in the James Bay area of Canada (see p. 1). Her latest journal article, 'The Fiddlers of James Bay: Transatlantic Flows and Musical Indigenisation among the James Bay Cree' appears in *MUSICultures*, 40/1 (2013). She has been guest editor for academic



publications including the peer-reviewed *MUSICultures* and *Musiké* journals, and is website reviews editor for the world of music (new series) journal of ethnomusicology.

Frances will be lecturing on our Taught MLitt in Ethnology and Folklore as well as supervising research students. She also teaches courses in World Music, Scottish traditional music, Soundscapes Studies, and Ethnomusicology for the Department of Music. She maintains close links with the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Rostock in Germany, where she worked as a guest 'Eurolecturer' and researcher (funded by the Toepfer Foundation), in collaboration with Dr Barbara Alge, from 2010–2011.

We are very pleased to welcome Frances to the Institute and congratulate her and partner Ronan on the recent birth of their son, Seumas. **Thomas McKean**

Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk Traditions at the Institute

In May, the Institute welcomed Clarence Hostler, Sr, and Deborah Bruce-Hostler from California.

We came to Scotland in late May to honour our niece Natalie Brown's year of graduate study at the Institute, travelling from an area of north-western California – a mountainous place nourished by salmon-bearing rivers – where Clarence's indigenous Hupa, Yurok, and Karuk ancestors lived for thousands of years. We came to Scotland to hear Natalie and other music-makers play traditional music, and hoped to hear some very old songs and to share some of Clarence's culture, in which traditional songs play an essential role in spiritual practices.

We were soon in Portsoy with Natalie and her violin, to hear traditional music; Clarence brought his square drum made of California redwood and elk hide, and after listening to traditional Scottish tunes he offered a drum song – a luck song. Walking to a second music venue, another singer stopped us to thank Clarence for his song. Griogair Labhruidh introduced himself and said he'd like to sing for Clarence. He stood in the street and sang the song of the swan, 'Guileag ò , guileag ò / sgeula mo dhunaigh, / Guilleag ì / Rinn mo leire' / Guileag ò / Mo chasan dubh, / Guileag ì / 'S mi fè in gle'-gheal'.

In Aberdeen, Clarence talked about the High Dance culture of his ancestors, a living tradition known for 'World Renewal' ceremonies. He also described the Brush Dance child healing ritual, told a brief version of a long story his grandmother taught him about the origins of this healing ritual at his ancestral village of Weitchpec, and then sang the song that accompanies his family's version of this tale, a 'heavy song' that he sings when the Brush Dance takes place at certain ancient village sites. We much appreciated the chance to offer a glimpse of cultural survival from our part of the world.

Travelling with Natalie to the Highlands, we took up Griogair's invitation to come to his native Ballachulish. He generously spent a couple of days showing us his ancestral land, telling us the names of mountains and the stories behind them, singing Gaelic songs, and comparing notes on the often melancholy privilege of living out a commitment as a keeper of cultural knowledge. Beside the burn on Griogair's croft, after hearing his Gaelic songs, Clarence again sang his 'heavy song' – 'Frog's Song' from the first Brush Dance at Weitchpec – and his song for the White Deerskin Dance, and there we had a remarkable meeting of old cultures and the establishment of a new friendship between two far-flung culture-bearers, through a sharing of traditional songs.

Before coming to Scotland, we had requested an appointment with Henrietta Lidchi, Keeper of the Department of World Cultures at the National Museums of Scotland, to see several items that long ago found their way to Edinburgh from Clarence's part of the world

– a Yurok woman's ceremonial dress from the early 1800s, an obsidian blade used for the White Deerskin Dance, and a woodpecker-crest headpiece for the Jump Dance (the 'World Renewal' High Dance ceremonies). This was not only a matter of seeing these prayer pieces,

European Union Interpreters Get to Grips with Doric

A group of 60 interpreters from the EU headquarters in Brussels on a tour of the North-East joined us for a talk on our local dialect. Sheena Blackhall and I had agreed to deliver, with the proviso that we could keep it light. The fact that our visitors were language specialists was a plus and we decided to show them how the language is, and was, used. We gave them a brief history and Sheena demonstrated how she teaches the 'Doric' in our local schools (it was a matter of surprise to some to find local dialect being taught in schools at all). We also gave them some examples of how the dialect is used in verse and song and Sheena was able to read from her own works as well as that of other poets from the area. Sheena sang them an old ballad and I tested their patience with a bothy song.

One of the interpreters had his young son with him, a laddie of about three years old, who sat quietly throughout until we gave them an example of a Doric rap. The sounds delighted him and he laughed and clapped the whole way through. What is it about sounds that fascinates children?

A number of our guests asked if the dialect was still spoken with any frequency an comin fae Maud I wis able tae tell them that in oor airt we wir aa haudin it gyan an the aul tongue is aye knypin on.

We got a standing ovation and, on their departure, our visitors were kind enough to



say that our wee presentation was one of the highlights of their tour. Sheena and I were the recipients of some very tasty, expensive Belgian chocolates and what we thocht might be a gey tchaav turned out to be a most enjoyable way to spend a July afternoon. **Les Wheeler**

The Friends of the Elphinstone Institute Fiddle Bus outing, 20 Sept. Paul Anderson, Heather Anderson and Carley Williams play a tune for Peter Milne, the Tarland Minstrel. Photo by Ian Russell

Fiona Dow writes from Brussels. 'We all absolutely adored Sheena and Les, it really is not an exaggeration to say that they were one of the highlights of the trip! Their passion for their subject shone through and they had us all in stitches. We are more than clued up by now.'



Prof. Luiz Heitor (second from right) with fieldwork truck and members of the research party, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, January, 1946.

Alan Lomax, Hamish Henderson and Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo

This September, I joined the Institute as a visiting scholar to pursue a project comparing the fieldwork methodologies of Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo (1905–1992) in Brazil and that used by Alan Lomax (1915–2002), the renowned American researcher, and intellectual mentor of Luiz Heitor, in his fieldwork in Ireland, England and Scotland in 1951–52. At a later stage, I hope to investigate why Lomax's work with Hamish Henderson, among others, was able to leverage a revival of interest in folklore in Scotland, England and the United States, while that of Luiz Heitor did not have the same effect in Brazil. **Henrique Drach**

Snapshots of Cullerlie 2013

The thirteenth Traditional Singing Weekend at Cullerlie, 26–28 July, proved to be a great success with all the weekend tickets sold and some very positive feedback. One of our younger singing guests was Stuart Carolan from Drogheda in County Louth, who follows in the footsteps of his grandmother, Mary Ann Carolan, a renowned performer of Irish ballads and songs. Stuart gave some stunning performances, which showed him to be a most worthy inheritor of his family's traditions. He was accompanied by his wife, Siobhan, and his father, Pat, who is also a fine singer.



Stuart and Pat Carolan Photo by Mary Masson



Dowsing at Cullerlie Photo by Ian Russell

Every year at the festival we try to ensure that a number of rural/country crafts are featured, but this year was a little different. We focused on two unusual skills – the ability to dowse, and not just for water, with Alan Brownie – and the ancient game of quoits taught by Graeme Eddie, a senior member of Scotland's only surviving club, the Dunnottar Quoiting Club in Stonehaven.