



On 28 Mairch 2018, we, wi oor pairtners fae Robert Gordon Varsity an the fower North-East Councils, launched the North-East Scots Leid Board. We hid speeches fae Executive

and Advisory Board members, each outlinin their ain thochts an ideas aboot Scots an sharin the Board's plans fur the futur. The spickers were Elphinstone Institute Director Thomas McKean, scriever and broadcaster Billy Kay, RGU's Peter Reid, an oor ain Alistair Heather. Scots singer Iona Fyfe also recitit the Board's inaugural poem, 'The Stobbie Hedge', scrievit in Scots bi local poet John Bolland.

Mair than a hunner fowk turnt oot wi mony o them spierin the spickers aboot the plans an giein their ain thochts on fit the priorities should be. The ivint wis weel reportit bi local and national press, wi coverage on BBC Radio Scotland, STV,



NORTH-EAST SCOTS LANGUAGE BOARD

tae mak oor regional dialects o the Scots language mair accessible tae bairns in scuil, students at the Varsity, aa fowk in civic life, an in the media across the North-East.

Simon Gall

BBC Scotland, Scots Radio, an local an national papers.

The Board has been set up tae gie a heeze tae aa the dialects o North-East Scots, fae the Moray Firth tae the silvery Tay. Its aim is

Follow Elphinstone Institute on Social Media

For more information on the North-East Scots Language Board and all the other exciting things that we are up to at the Elphinstone Institute, search for us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Visit to James Bay, Canada

In February, I spent two weeks in the James Bay Cree community of Waskaganish, where I was invited to perform, alongside fiddler Ronan Martin and step-dancers Caroline Reagh and Mac Morin, for the 350-year anniversary of the settlement. Waskaganish originated as one of the first Hudson's Bay Company trading posts and is the oldest Cree community in James Bay. We all felt privileged to be taking part in the celebrations and community life during our stay there. In addition to the performances, I spent a productive week working with curator Jamie Stevens on the upcoming exhibition Niimitaau (Let's Dance!) Fiddle Music between Scots and Eyou Cultures, which will be held at the Special

Collections Gallery at the Sir Duncan Rice Library from 10 July to 31 October 2018, and will then be toured around each of the

Cree communities in Eastern James Bay in 2019. The exhibition is in partnership between the Elphinstone Institute, Special Collections, and the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Centre in Oujé-Bougoumou, Quebec, and I have been working in collaboration with Jamie Stevens to produce the content. Jamie will be coming to Aberdeen for the launch of the exhibition and to present about the exhibition at the symposium of the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention.

Frances Wilkins

l to r Frances, Ada and Jamie



Professor Paul Mealor leading the rehearsal of the Messiah in Doric on Saturday, 10 March 2018 at St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen

RAI Blacking Lecture

We are delighted to be hosting the annual Royal Anthropological Institute Blacking Lecture on Thursday, 1 November 2018, in the Linklater Rooms. The Blacking Lecture celebrates the life and work of the celebrated ethnomusicologist, Professor John Blacking. The invited speaker is distinguished ethnomusicologist, Emeritus Professor Ruth Finnegan (The Open University). The title of Ruth's lecture is 'Where does music come from? "Now much aware of my mortality I feel again the eternity of music"' (words of John Blacking shortly before his death in 1990).

Frances Wilkins



From the Director

Things are getting very busy around here in the run up to the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention in July, but there's a lot going on in other areas as well. In March, we premiered the Doric Messiah at St Machar's Cathedral, with translation by Gordon Hay. Under the direction of Paul Mealor, a seventy-strong volunteer choir took the Buchan dialect of North-East Scots through a door it has never been through before. It was a wonderful occasion and there were more than a few misty eyes.

Later in March, we launched the North-East Scots Language Board, in co-operation with Robert Gordon University, and City, Shire, Moray, and Angus Councils, to promote the dialects of the North-East in the media, education, and public life. The board will be taking shape over the next few months and we'll have much more to report come autumn. In the meantime, our aims and objectives can be seen on our website, under Resources.

At the end of March, we joined in a concert at Cecil Sharp House in London celebrating Julia Bishop's AHRC-funded project to get the James Madison Carpenter Collection online at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. '40,000 Miles in Quest of Tradition' brought together folk choirs from Scotland and England – Irene Watt's Mearns Singers and the Cecil Sharp House Choir – along with the New Camden Jazz Ensemble, the London Youth Folk Ensemble, and special guests Jennifer Cutting and Stephen Winick from the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, home to the original collection. The sold-out evening featured contemporary performances of materials from the collection, sea shanties to ballads, lyric songs to Morris tunes. It was a spectacular tribute to Carpenter, and to the hard work done by Julia and our partners at the English Folk Dance and Song Society and Cecil Sharp House, Laura Smyth, Cassie Tait, Rachel Elliot, Katy Spicer, Richard Butterworth, and Steve Roud, as well as the dedicated team at the American Folklife Center who digitised the collection and who have been campaigning for this day for three decades.

In June, we'll be holding the second annual Summer School of the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore for PhD students from across Europe. The week-long intensive series of workshops will explore how communities can drive the work of ethnologists and folklorists, rather than scholars simply imposing outside frameworks on the people with whom they work. Naturally, it's a balancing act, one which requires sensitivity and a high regard for the contributors who make our work possible. Our star guests will be Robert Baron and Elaine Lawless from the USA, who will talk about cultural brokerage and co-producing research. The School also features workshops with our own Chris Wright, with his colleagues from Local Voices, Steve Byrne and Mairi MacFadyen, along with sessions from Donald Smith, Scottish Storytelling Centre, and Gary West, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at Edinburgh, and our own staff and students.

We are very pleased to welcome Carley Williams to our staff as Festival Director for the 2018 North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, 11–15 July; see our website for the latest exciting developments, and be sure to join us for the NAFCo launch concert, 'Celebrating the Fiddle', on 19 April at the Lemon Tree. Also new to our staff are Simon Gall and Irene Watt, who will be joining Alistair Heather on the Public Engagement side of things. The team will make our presence felt all over the region from the Tay to the Moray Firth, with a focus on helping young folk engage with traditions new and old, working in regeneration areas of the City and Shire, and facilitating engagement with North-East Scots/Doric from pre-school to tertiary education.

Well done to our MLitt graduates, Vera Nikitina, Elizabeth Kent, Ryo Yamasaki, and Chris Wright, who now joins us, with one of the university's Elphinstone Scholarships, for a PhD on using local traditions to connect children with their regions and communities. And finally, warm congratulations to our Patron, Very Reverend Professor Sir Iain Torrance, for his knighthood awarded in the recent New Year's Honours List.

Thomas A. McKean

Letter from Germany

My dear Elphinstone friends,
All has been well with me the past few years. After my MLitt, I spent a year as a volunteer at the Goethe-Institut in Amman, Jordan, during which time I completed a German-as-a-foreign-language teacher certificate. Thereafter, I was offered the position of head librarian and part-time teacher, which I gladly accepted to gain some work experience. All together I stayed three years and three months in Jordan.

Since January 2017 I have been working at the City Museum of Hamelin in northern Germany. When the job announcement from the town of the Pied Piper came along, I felt I had to apply for good old narrative research's sake, and indeed, I managed to get chosen from a pool of 199 applicants! I am working here as a young-museum-professional-in-training until the end of 2018. I recently applied for funds and if all goes well I may stay another 1 ½ years.

I regularly follow the Elphinstone's Facebook account, thus I am aware of some of the things that have happened while I have been away. I noticed that you got to know my former professor, Sabine Wienker-Piepho, on the occasion of the Bill Nicolaisen Memorial Symposium in July 2017, which I still regret being unable to attend. I am also quite envious concerning the new 'field school' for the MLitt students. Sometimes I wish I could study a second MLitt! Keep up the good work!



Wibke Reimer, MLitt Graduate of 2013

North Atlantic Fiddle Convention 2018

Plans for the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention (NAFCo) are speeding along. Our new website is about to launch, the performer guest list is first-rate, and we can't wait to unveil our programme of events for July.

This year NAFCo, which is a unique globe-trotting event for lovers of fiddle music, dance, and learning, has the theme Dialects and Dialogues.

It will revisit the North-East from 11 to 15 July 2018. It is both an exhilarating festival – celebrating and showcasing the very best of fiddle and dance styles from around the North Atlantic seaboard – and an international academic conference attracting some of the world's top minds working on related research.



NAFCo 2018 will boast another world-class line up of leading musicians from the far reaches of the North Atlantic – Scotland, Ireland,

England, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Canada, USA – and a few surprises thrown in as well.

There will be an exciting programme of more than 150 events, including talks, presentations, and hands-on fiddle and dance workshops taught by local, national, and international tutors, as



well as a fiddle camp for young people led by celebrated Scottish fiddler Patsy Reid. Expect concerts, ceilidhs, film screenings, sessions, club nights, pop-up gigs, busking trails, and so much more. These will be paralleled by a symposium of talks and presentations, open to academics and the public.

For a preview of what is to come, join us at the festival launch 'Celebrating

the Fiddle' on Thursday, 19 April, during the inaugural Other Music Festival in Aberdeen, with a concert showcasing the best of North-East fiddle tunes, Hungarian Roma music, and much more. For tickets visit www.othermusicpromotions.com.

Newsletter readers are entitled to a 10% discount using discount code NAFCo when booking online or by phone (01224 641122).

For more information about NAFCo, sign up to the mailing list at www.northatlanticfiddle.com

Carley Williams and Simon Gall



MLitt Course Film Workshop: The Snow Kirk

As part of this term's MLitt course, we were tasked with making a short film about the Snow Kirk. Today, a small graveyard is all that remains of a hidden site on the university campus that once contained a church and churchyard built in the late 1400s.

We enjoyed a two-day workshop with guests Dr Teri Brewer and Dr Marion Bowman. Dr Brewer, an ethnographic filmmaker, shared her experiences of filmmaking and taught us techniques in audio and visual recording as well as still photography. Dr Bowman helped us understand the significance of the Kirk and the iconography associated with it, as well as its possible contemporary use for spiritual reflection.

In making the film, we recorded audio, video, and still images around the Kirk and university campus, and talked with local experts Dr Fiona Jane Brown and Grace Banks, as well as Father Murphy of the university's Catholic Chaplaincy. Special Collections and the National Library of Scotland provided archive images and maps, and current visitors to the Kirk told us about their experiences of the space.

This vast amount of material had to fit three minutes



– editing it was not an easy task! And, as is common with fieldwork, things did not always go as planned, but we hope that the resulting film will spark people's interest in delving deeper into the history of this fascinating place.

The film will be uploaded to our website and screened at next year's Ethnographic Film Series.

Emma Barclay, Lauren Hossack, Ania Trepczyk

What's On: Lectures, Film Series, and Other Events

The Scottish Travellers: Tobar an Keir

For the past several months I have been working with the Elphinstone Institute to create a unique exhibition and cultural awareness programme about Scottish Travellers for the upcoming May Festival. We have also been working with the following charities that support Travellers and promote equality throughout Scotland: Article 12, MECOPP, HOTT, and GREC.

The programme of events, titled 'Tobar an Keir' (Scottish Traveller Cant for Road and House), will take place throughout the week prior to (21–24 May) and including the May Festival weekend (25–27 May). Events will include the installation of a Traveller camp on King's Lawn consisting of a traditional Traveller bow tent and a modern trailer. This is with the aim of showing the old and new, the heritage and contemporary lifestyles of many Scottish Travellers. Traveller storytellers Essie Stewart, Jess Smith, and Jimmy Williamson will be present to portray the ancient folklore and ballad traditions of the Traveller people.

There will also be talks given by the community and academics on Traveller culture, lifestyle, history, and the contemporary issues that they face. All this in addition to artefact, photo, and video exhibitions, some of which have never before been shown to the public.

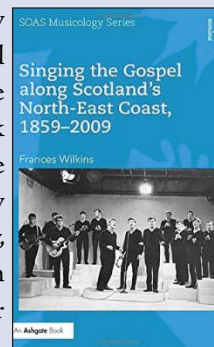
This significant project is a first for any university in Scotland and we are proud to have the programme featured in the 2018 May Festival. Travellers have often been misunderstood and misrepresented, but they are ever-present and positively contributing to Scottish culture and society. If you want to learn more about their heritage and lives today then this programme is not to be missed.

Please see below for details of timings and venues.

Davie Donaldson

Davie Donaldson is a Scottish Traveller activist and student of Anthropology and International Relations at the University, and is currently enrolled in our Scottish Folklore and Oral Traditions course.

Frances Wilkins's monograph, *Singing the Gospel along Scotland's North-East Coast, 1859–2009*, was recently published by Routledge as part of the SOAS musicology series. The book draws on three years of ethnomusicological fieldwork on the sacred singing traditions of evangelical Christians in North-East Scotland and Northern Isles coastal communities. Frances documents and analyses current singing practices by placing them historically and contemporaneously within their respective faith communities, drawing attention to singing not only within the church environment, but in a variety of community and occupational settings. There will be a book launch at the University's May Festival on Friday, 25 May, at 12pm in the Linklater Rooms.



The Institute at the May Festival

Friday, 25 May 2018

12.00pm Book Launch, Linklater Room
9.00pm til late NAFCo at the Blue Lamp Celebrating North-East Traditional Music - £5.00

Saturday 26 May 2018

2:30–3:00pm & Stories and Songs:
3:30–4:00pm Traditional Traveller Encampment. King's Lawn

Sunday, 27 May 2018

11:00am Polish Scottish Songs May Tent, King's Lawn
1:30–2:30pm A History of Scottish Travellers, New Kings 14
2:00–2:30pm & Stories and Songs:
3:00–3:30pm Traditional Traveller Encampment. King's Lawn
5:00–6:00pm Traditional Music Session Linklater Rooms

19 April 2018

NAFCo Launch Concert, Lemon Tree
27–29 July 2018 (Cullerlie Farm Park)
The Traditional Singing Weekend at Cullerlie

25 October 2018, Linklater Room

Scottish International Storytelling Festival

1 November 2018, Linklater Room

Blacking Lecture

11–15 April 2019

British Forum for Ethnomusicology, Annual Conference.

Public Lecture Series & Ethnographic Film Series

Check for dates and full details on our website:
www.abdn.ac.uk/elphinstone

Who's Who at the Institute

Staff

Dr Thomas A. McKean, Director, *Ethnology and Folklore, ballads, custom and belief, Gaelic tradition, J. M. Carpenter Project*

Dr Frances Wilkins, Lecturer, *Ethnomusicology and Ethnology, sacred singing in coastal communities, Scottish fiddle traditions in northern Canada*

Professor Emeritus Ian Russell, *Ethnology, Folklore, and Ethnomusicology, oral traditions, including singing, music-making, drama and speech*

Dr Colin Milton, Associate Director, Hon., *Scottish literature and Folklore, especially of the North-East*

Nicolas Le Bigre, Teaching Fellow, *archives*

Carley Williams, NAFCo Festival Director

Simon Gall, Public Engagement Officer

Dr Irene Watt, Public Engagement Officer

Alistair Heather, Community Engagement Officer

Alison Sharman, Administrator

Patron

Very Rev. Prof. Sir Iain Torrance, Pro-Chancellor

Honorary Research Fellows

Dr David Atkinson, *J. M. Carpenter Project*

Dr Julia C. Bishop, *J. M. Carpenter Project*

Research Students

Athanasios (Sakis) Barmpalexis, PhD student, *contemporary shamanism in Scotland*

Kristin Borgehed, PhD student, *North Studentship, an ethnographic study of northern cultural performance*

Les Donaldson, PhD student, *The Seven Incorporated Trades of Aberdeen*

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

Nicolas Le Bigre, PhD student, *narratives of immigrant experience*

Hazel Macfarlane, PhD student, *retirement and volunteering in museum contexts*

Claire Needler, PhD student, *Elphinstone Scholarship, bilingualism in North-East schools.*

Máire Ní Bhaoill, PhD student, *traditional singing among children in Ireland*

Erika Sidorenko, PhD student, *traditional remedies and cultural change in the Hebrides*

Lorna Summers, PhD student, *community boatbuilding on the Moray coast*

Carley Williams, PhD student, *safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Scotland*

Chris Wright, PhD student, *The Role of Traditional Arts in Place-Based Education*

Research Associates

Paul Anderson, *North-East fiddle styles and repertoires*

Dr Pat Ballantyne, *Scottish step-dance traditions*

Sheena Blackhall, *creative writing in Scots*

Dr Elaine Bradtke, *J. M. Carpenter Project*

Dr David Northcroft, *education in the North-East*

Dr Robert Young Walser, *maritime musical traditions, J. M. Carpenter Project*

Les Wheeler, *Scots language, education*

Dr Sheila Young, *women's pre-nuptial rituals in northern Scotland*

Postscript

The Institute relies on outside financial support to make many of its activities possible. If you would like to help, join the Friends of the Elphinstone Institute, volunteer, or have suggestions, please contact the Administrator.