The Carrying Stream Flows On

Celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the School of Scottish Studies

Edited by Bob Chambers

The Islands Book Trust

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Introduction

John Randall

The School of Scottish Studies came into being at the University of Edinburgh in 1951 as a research unit dedicated to 'the study and conservation of the folk culture of Scotland' when Professor Angus McIntosh was enabled to turn a vision which he and others had long held into reality. In that year Calum Iain Maclean was seconded from the Irish Folklore Commission to continue his collecting in Scotland, while other pioneers such as Hamish Henderson and Alan Lomax were also beginning the monumental task of systematically recording the rich oral culture of Scotland in Scots and Gaelic. The School of Scottish Studies Archives, now located in Celtic and Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University, continue as a dynamic and inspiring resource for all with an interest in Scotland and her cultural heritage, a treasure-house of sound recordings and photographs from Shetland to the Borders, from the Western Isles to Buchan, supported by an outstanding research library and other materials.

The contributions brought together in this volume are based on talks given at a conference organised by the Islands Book Trust in association with the University of Edinburgh in August 2011 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the School. This was an appropriate time to look back on, review, and assess the unique contribution made by the School of Scottish Studies to our knowledge and understanding of Scotland. The conference attracted an exceptional array of first-class speakers, many of whom worked for or have been closely associated with the School over the years. The conference looked at some of the pioneers who are no longer with us, as well as reflecting on other key figures who played a seminal role in the history of the School. We were joined by scholars from outwith Scotland, placing the School's work in a wider international Celtic and Nordic context, and helping us to evaluate critically the significance of the School's work and history.

It was particularly fitting that the conference took place in Shetland in 2011, a year of national celebration of the culture of Scotland's islands. I believe that the islands of Scotland have contributed disproportionately to the history, literature, and heritage of Scotland. The islands seem to have generated more than their fair share of characters and tradition bearers. One can speculate as to why this should be the case, based on geography, a sense of distinctiveness, and perhaps an element of protection from modernising and homogenising cultural forces, but the archives of the School – whether in Gaelic, Scots, or English – appear to give this claim some support.

Like all Book Trust events, the conference was not only an 'academic' occasion. We pride ourselves in bringing people together from a range of different backgrounds on the principle that we can all learn from each other's perspectives, and that a mixture of backgrounds adds to the enjoyment of the occasion. We also believe there are great advantages in holding conferences in a community setting, with active participation by local people. So most sessions took place in the Islesburgh Complex of community facilities in the heart of Lerwick. In addition to the more formal talks, there was a visit to the wonderful Shetland Museum and Archives, and a ceilidh featuring the live traditions of Shetlandic music, stories, and songs. We also used the occasion of the conference to launch a new book by Christopher Mylne about his memories of living in Foula in the 1950s, and a small group of us went on to spend a few days in Foula following the conference in the company of Chris and his family.

I should like to thank everyone who made the conference and this splendid volume of papers possible. First, our funders: Scotland's Islands, Awards for All, LEADER Innse Gall, HIE, and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Second, all those who helped in the organisation, particularly Margaret Mackay, former Director of the School and of its Archives, Shetland Amenity Trust, the catering and technical staff at the Islesburgh Complex, the late Elma Johnson, Donald Murray, Louise Scollay, and our own staff and Trustees, particularly Alayne Barton, Margaret Macdonald, and Donnie Morrison. Third, all those who have worked in the School of Scottish Studies over the decades, including figures of national and

international stature described in these pages, some sadly no longer with us. And finally, all our speakers and contributors, from Iceland and the USA to Ireland and various parts of Scotland, to Bob Chambers who ably edited this volume, and to all those who attended and participated in the conference from Shetland and all over the world.

What comes out of this volume most strikingly for me is that the wonderful range of material collected, preserved, and disseminated by the School of Scottish Studies over 60 years often has the deepest local roots yet is simultaneously of national and international significance. The work of the School has both helped to validate and encourage local cultures, and has also had a profound impact on Scotland's cultural and political development. Moreover, the heritage and history which we celebrate in this volume is a living tradition, as amply demonstrated by the conference ceilidh, which brought together Shetland musicians and story-tellers of all generations. The carrying stream flows on, and long may it continue to deepen, broaden, and inspire.

John Randall, Chairman, the Islands Book Trust
November 2012

The First Sixty Years of the School of Scottish Studies: An Overview

Margaret A Mackay

Margaret A Mackay was born in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada in 1945, the descendant of emigrants from Sutherland and Inverness-shire. She entered the University of Toronto as a Governor-General's medallist and gained her BA in English Language and Literature (First Class Honours) there in 1967. That year a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship enabled her to undertake a one-year post-graduate Diploma in Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, where she subsequently carried out research for her PhD as a Canada Council scholarship-holder under the supervision of Professors Angus McIntosh and A J (Jack) Aitken.

She was appointed to the School of Scottish Studies in 1974 as a Research Fellow, working with the late Eric R Cregeen on a Social Science Research Council project relating to Tiree in the 18th and 19th centuries and its emigrant communities in Canada. A decade later she joined the permanent staff as a Lecturer, later Senior Lecturer. She was part of the team which offered the first degrees in Scottish Ethnology in the department in the 1980s and in 1994 she became Director of the School of Scottish Studies, later Director of its Archives following university restructuring, and Director of the European Ethnological Research Centre. She retired in 2010 and is now an Honorary Fellow at the university.

Her teaching, research and publications have embraced both the medieval and modern periods in Scotland and include language history, oral sources for community history, culture transfer and adaptation, social organisation and the ethnology of religious expression. She also has a keen interest in comparative studies in the wider European ethnological context, the place of Scotland at the crossroads of the Celtic and Scandinavian culture areas, and within this the history, role and work of the School of Scottish Studies.

Introduction: The Early Vision

The collecting of material relating to Scotland's oral and material culture, its songs, narratives, customs, beliefs and ways of life, has been carried out for many centuries but it was not until the founding of the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1951 that

the subject became firmly fixed within an institutional framework. Early work was carried out by those with antiquarian interests, later by those inspired by the poetry of the folk and by studies carried out elsewhere in Europe. Individuals with the personal means to travel and collect were at the fore, and the permanent record of such collections normally took the form of publication. In some cases the associated manuscripts came into the possession of public repositories, such as the John Francis Campbell of Islay (1821–1885) papers in the National Library of Scotland. With the development of folklore as a discipline in the nineteenth century came organisations and journals. The Folklore Society (founded 1878) had from the start members in Scotland who carried out collecting work according to its guidance, published in its journal and deposited material in its archives.

The decades immediately prior to the founding of the School of Scottish Studies saw some very positive efforts towards a more systematic framework for the collection, study and dissemination of folklore and folklife materials. The Anthropological and Folklore Society of Scotland had its origins in the Edinburgh and Lothians Branch of the Royal Anthropological Institute, founded in 1922. A decade later the Society was set up, first known as the Scottish Anthropological Society, with "Folklore" added to its title in 1936. It brought together individuals of like mind with interests in comparative cultural study, including Scottish topics, and the capacity to produce a journal. Its *Proceedings* were published between 1934 and 1956. The Society's membership included academics, museum staff, fellows of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and retired colonial officials, some of whom had published extensively.

It is worth giving some attention here to its activities, as many of its aspirations prefigure the work undertaken when the School of Scottish Studies and associated projects came into being. The editorial in the first volume of the *Proceedings* refers to the recent establishment of a Folk-Museum Committee and to an approach made to the Society by the Director of the Irish Folklore Institute, James Hamilton Delargy (1899–1980), regarding the publication of unpublished material in the Campbell of Islay papers. Professor Delargy, as will be seen, was to play a vital role in the creation of the School of Scottish Studies fifteen years later.

Another supportive international scholar, who was to play a significant part in the early years of the School of Scottish Studies, came into the Scottish picture under the aegis of the Society in the mid-1930s, the Swedish scholar Åke Campbell (1891–1957). The Society created an Institute of Anthropology at the Free Church College in Edinburgh, where instruction for certificate and diploma studies was offered by members and staff of museums in Edinburgh. The same volume announces that Dr Åke Campbell of the University of Uppsala, having been designated an Honorary Lecturer of the Institute, "will deliver some lectures and inaugurate research work in Celtic folk-lore studies according to the Scandinavian method". His visit is reported in the September 1935 number, when he outlined a plan for active co-operation in anthropological research among all the northern European nations, the outcome of a series of negotiations in which Swedish, Irish and Scottish scholars had participated and which was formalised in Lund in November of that year as the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore.

In February 1936 there are references to the desirability of a Survey of Scottish Dialects, to co-operation with the European Dialect Atlas project, and to the creation of a "research laboratory" called the "Scottish Archive for Ethnological, Folkloristic and Linguistic Studies" in association with the Institute. Some time after, a lexical questionnaire was distributed by its Language Survey Committee, chaired by John Orr (1885–1966), Professor of French at the University of Edinburgh from 1933 and a specialist in linguistic geography, who was in the 1950s closely associated with the Linguistic Survey of Scotland and with the School of Scottish Studies. It was reported that the University of Uppsala had offered a student internship for training purposes.

The following year saw an opportunity for developing links further, as the Society had offered to host the congress of the new international association in Edinburgh. In spite of some organisational difficulties this took place in July with participation and contributions by notable and rising scholars. At it Professor Sigurd Erixon of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm delivered the Im Thurn Memorial Lecture, instituted in memory of one of the Society's founding members, on "Nordic Open-Air

Museums and Skansen" and also spoke on "West European Connections and Culture Relations". Dr Carl Wilhelm von Sydow of Lund University also spoke twice, on "Rites" and on "Popular Prose Traditions and their Classification", and Dr Åke Campbell, who, like von Sydow and many other Swedish scholars, had strong Irish interests, presented a paper on "The Irish House". A further instance of such collaboration came in the form of a photographic exhibition.

Irish scholars Gerard Murphy and Sean O Sullivan were also present and Scottish contributions came from J C Catford on Scottish dialects and a proposed Linguistic Atlas of Scotland, and from A J Brock and Dr A MacDonald on Scottish place-names. There was a display of Scottish country dancing and a ceilidh featuring a group of Gaelic-speaking women illustrating the *luadh* (cloth waulking to the accompaniment of song) and *port a beul* (mouth music). The Celtic Congress was also taking place in Edinburgh at the time and this may have offered an opportunity for the inclusion of these elements of Gaelic culture in the conference.

However, this growing momentum was shortly to be halted. With the onset of the Second World War the Society suspended its activities, though the first volume of J G McKay's edition of John Campbell's *More West Highland Tales* was published in 1940 under its aegis. Its programme resumed in the 1945–46 session. In 1948 it hosted a Folk Music and Dance Festival with participants from throughout the United Kingdom and from Ireland and beyond, including Åke Campbell. Its lecture series continued, with Kenneth Jackson (1909–1991), Professor of Celtic Languages, History and Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh from 1950 delivering a paper in 1952 on "The Folktale in Gaelic Scotland" which referred to the work of the new School of Scottish Studies. He was also President of the Society for several sessions in the 1950s. In the 1955–56 session the Society was addressed by Stewart F Sanderson, Secretary-Archivist in the School of Scottish Studies (whose paper was published in 1957 in the inaugural volume of *Scottish Studies*) and by Hamish Henderson, then on the School's staff as well, who played a selection of songs he had recorded on field work.

This volume of its *Proceedings* announced that in the coming session the lecture series would concentrate on Scottish Folk-Life and Anthropology,

but within a few years the Society was wound up. The University of Edinburgh had embraced the subject of anthropology, with former members and office-bearers now in the new department, the School of Scottish Studies had come into being and the Linguistic Surveys of Gaelic and Scots were also well underway. Developments in the museum world were looking toward a permanent folk-life exhibition.

Another body active for a short time in the latter part of this period was the Folklore Institute of Scotland (its acronym FIOS forming the Gaelic word for "knowledge"). John Lorne Campbell of Canna (1906–1996), one of the twentieth century pioneers of Scottish Gaelic folklore collecting and scholarship, was instrumental in its creation in 1947, along with the Rev T M Murchison (1907–1984). They were its President and Chair respectively. James Hamilton Delargy had also encouraged its formation and attended its inaugural meeting. FIOS pressed for the recognition and recording of Scotland's oral heritage and ceased operation when the School of Scottish Studies came into being and took up this challenge.

Against this background we may now take up the story of the School of Scottish Studies itself. But a preliminary word is in order here. The School of Scottish Studies family in its first sixty years is composed of staff engaged in collecting, researching, lecturing, archiving, indexing, transcribing texts or music, editing its publications and co-ordinating their distribution, supporting its work in vital ways as secretaries, in technical posts relating to sound and visual material, or in the library, and as the servitors who were often the first to welcome visitors to its premises. It includes the multitude of scholars from home and abroad and all who have made use of its collections, the students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels who have gained its degrees, the visiting professors who have brought their expertise to its programmes and the honorary fellows who have been given this designation as a result of their contribution to the deepening of our knowledge of Scotland and its wider contexts. It includes a band of enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers. All have their place in this story. But in an overview of six decades such as this it is not possible to name them all and it must be stressed that they are all remembered with gratitude nonetheless.

In 1948 Angus McIntosh (1914–2005) was appointed the first holder of the Forbes Chair of English Language and General Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh. A scholar of medieval English dialectology, he had had experience in the Second World War which was directly relevant to the projects he founded and fostered in the years immediately following. As part of the code-breaking enterprise based at Bletchley Park, he had become convinced of the potential in new technology such as magnetic tape, the portable tape recorder and the computer for linguistic study and research. Additionally, he had experienced there the benefits of individuals working as part of a large team, each contributing a focussed piece of research or collection towards the completion of a larger project. While not uncommon in the world of science, this was a fairly untried concept in the arts and humanities.

Angus McIntosh
(Andrew Swanston)

McIntosh had formed a close friendship with John Lorne Campbell of Canna and his wife, the folklorist Margaret Fay Shaw (1903–2004), in the 1930s, and while a Commonwealth Fellow at Harvard he had accompanied them in 1937 on field work in the Gaelic-speaking communities of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton in Canada. Aware of the inter-relatedness of lore and language, he moved soon after his arrival at the University of Edinburgh to establish the Linguistic Surveys of Scotland (Scots and Gaelic) and shortly after, the School of Scottish Studies. He found in his Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the time, the newly-appointed Sir Edward Victor Appleton (1892–1965), who had won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1947, a receptive supporter. In that confident and forward-looking post-war period Appleton was recruiting a new generation of staff who were bringing fresh experience to old disciplines and seeking to develop new ones, rebuilding scholarly networks and working in new and collaborative ways. He saw the potential in what McIntosh was suggesting and encouraged him with staff appointments and equipment budgets which ensured that the University of Edinburgh could aim for and achieve the highest possible sound quality in its language laboratories, its field recordings and its phonetic analysis. Thus it came about that the first recordings of folklore materials in the School of Scottish Studies Archives were made in the course of dialect surveys undertaken in the late 1940s.

Discussions began at that time with the heads or representatives of a number of interested departments in the University of Edinburgh, including Scottish History, Celtic, Scots Law, Geography, Archaeology, Music, English Literature and Social Anthropology, and a formal committee was established to "draw up a memorandum advocating the establishment within the University of Edinburgh of a School of Scottish Studies", where an interdisciplinary approach to research on aspects of Scottish life and culture could be fostered. At a meeting on 15 May 1950 the University Court approved in principle the memorandum submitted to it, which suggested seven topics and activities to be undertaken by research staff. These were as follows: field study and analysis of material culture; the compilation of data for maps of prehistoric and later Scotland;

the collection of place-names from oral and documentary sources and the creation of a place-name archive; the collection of oral traditions in all parts of Scotland and the organisation of an equivalent folklore archive for these; the study of Scottish music and its affinities with the musics of other cultures; the integration of anthropological field work with the work of the School and the co-ordination of the study of Scots Law with other studies there.

In order to ensure that the proposed School had "a national as distinct from an Edinburgh flavour" the co-operation of scholars from beyond the university would be encouraged, and a research library of books and journals including comparative materials from relevant cultures was to be built up from the start. Provision was to be made for archive accommodation where all the material collected would be readily available. Funds were sought from the Carnegie Trust to help initiate the new enterprise.

Angus McIntosh received moral and practical support in the creation of the School of Scottish Studies and during its formative period from James Hamilton Delargy, already referred to in connection with folklore activities in Scotland in the 1930s and 1940s. Antrim-born, he had had Scotland in his sights, both literally and metaphorically, from his earliest years. He had witnessed at first hand the wealth of living tradition in the Outer Hebrides during a visit there at the age of eighteen and was convinced that what Ireland had in institutional terms for the recognition and support of its cultural heritage Scotland should have as well. No sooner was the Irish Folklore Commission established (1935) than he was urging the authorities in Scotland to form a similar body, even taking time during his honeymoon to meet with Scottish civil servants, the Carnegie Trust and educational authorities in order to press the issue.

The work of the Scottish Society for Anthropology and Folklore attracted his interest, as we have seen, and he encouraged the collecting undertaken by the Campbells of Canna, attending the first meeting of the Folklore Institute of Scotland, whose President Campbell was. It was through that connection that he and Angus McIntosh came into contact and he invited McIntosh to make a visit to Dublin to see at first hand the organisation and working methods of the Irish Folklore Commission

in 1950. It was in the Commission that Calum Maclean (1915–1960) was trained as a folklore fieldworker and encouraged by Delargy to collect in Scotland under its aegis. He commended Maclean to McIntosh and his committee in the highest possible terms and Maclean came back to Scotland with his blessing. McIntosh and Delargy soon established a strong bond of friendship and mutual support which endured until the latter's death in 1980.

If one of the School's godparents was Ireland the other was Sweden. Delargy was also key to this important connection. In 1924, when a young student, he met the pioneering Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878–1952), whose own interest in Irish folklore was deep, and was greatly encouraged by him. With his help he was able to undertake an extensive

James Hamilton Delargy (courtesy of Caitríona Miles)

study trip to Scandinavia, Finland and Estonia in 1928, making helpful contacts with scholars there including the ethnologist Åke Campbell, who was to study Irish material culture extensively, and receiving practical instruction in Swedish methods of folklore and material culture collecting, indexing and analysis. He was greatly influenced by von Sydow's theories in a continuing collaboration. All these he put into practice when the Irish Folklore Institute was formed in 1930, and from 1935, when the larger Irish Folklore Commission was established. Von Sydow's library came to the Irish Folklore Commission on his death and the Irish-Swedish axis continues to be a potent one. Delargy urged McIntosh to include Dag Strömbäck, Head of the Dialect and Folklore Archive at Uppsala (from 1948 Professor of Nordic and Comparative Folk Culture Research there)

Åke Campbell and Calum Maclean

and Åke Campbell (Professor from 1952), who by then had visited the Hebrides with Calum Maclean, as advisors for the fledgling School, and both were supportive in a variety of practical ways.

The First Decade: 1951–1960

The vision became reality in 1951. In January of that year Calum Maclean arrived to take up a position as Research Fellow in Oral Traditions, thus becoming the first collector in the School of Scottish Studies. The earlier advisory group, the Committee on Post-Graduate Scottish Studies, gave way to an Executive Committee with a remit to administer and direct the day-to-day activities of the new entity. It was soon served by a Secretary-Archivist, Stewart F Sanderson, a recent graduate of the University of Edinburgh, and was chaired by Deans of the Faculty of Arts, among them Professor John Orr. A small number of representatives from the interested departments were included on a rotating basis, and the Secretary to the University attended its meetings in order to liaise with the university administration. An Advisory Committee on Research was maintained. Premises at 27–28 George Square (later extended to 29) were identified as a potential location for the School, though it was based in premises at Minto House in Chambers Street until 1954. The School of Scottish Studies had come into being.

The recording history of the School received a "kick-start" not only with the early recordings of the Linguistic Surveys of Scotland and the Phonetics Department, but also through the visit to the United Kingdom in 1950–51 of Alan Lomax (1915–2002) from the United States, who was collecting material for the Columbia World Library of Folk and Primitive Music. He was introduced to Scotland by the singer, song-writer and collector Ewan MacColl (1915–1989) and helped by Calum Maclean and by Hamish Henderson, who was to join the School staff some time later, to meet and record tradition-bearers in Scots and Gaelic-speaking parts of the country, from Edinburgh school-children to singers in the north-east and in the Hebrides. He had excellent equipment and along with the recordings made by members of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland and

the Phonetics Department of the University of Edinburgh, these were the foundational items in the School's sound recording collection.

In 1951 The People's Festival in Edinburgh gave a platform to several of the singers and instrumental musicians recorded by Lomax and the others in heartlands of living tradition, the "carrying stream" as Hamish Henderson so tellingly described it, and a very public validation of the work the School of Scottish Studies was undertaking. In that year as well an exhibition was held at the Royal Scottish Museum as a contribution to the Festival of Britain. Entitled "Living Traditions", it presented a showcase of the material culture of Scotland, its craft traditions and vernacular architecture, and included singing by Flora MacNeil of Barra, who had been recorded during the Lomax visit, to illustrate the *luadh* (waulking) tradition.

This early link with the USA is important to remember, for it was instrumental in the folk song revival of the 1950s on both sides of the Atlantic, in which Lomax and Henderson were major figures. And from its earliest days, the School of Scottish Studies attracted and welcomed a steady stream of scholars, students and artists not only from Scotland and elsewhere in the UK but also from North America and from all the continents, many of whom have played a major part in the development of Scottish Studies over the years.

Calum Maclean's training in Ireland, and his fieldwork experience there and in Scotland equipped him well for his remit in the School. Delargy also presented to the School copies of all of Calum's Scottish recordings from the Irish Folklore Commisssion as a handsel, a gift at the start of a new year or a new undertaking, and a copy of its seminal guide for field collecting, Sean O Sullivan's *Handbook of Irish Folklore*. It is worth noting that he had dedicated his volume to the people of Sweden, where he too had received much guidance, as well as to the people of Ireland. Immediately Calum began intensive work in the field, and he saw Scotland as a whole as his territory. Not only did he record in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands, but in the Borders and in Shetland also. However, at the start of his career in the School of Scottish Studies he had an experience similar to that from which his mentors Delargy and O Sullivan had benefited years earlier – a period of on-the-spot instruction by Swedish folklorists. And

here the links created in the 1930s but suspended during war-time and the post-war period were re-established, for it was Professor Åke Campbell who guided his Swedish stay.

With the agreement of the University of Edinburgh, Calum spent nine months in Sweden from July 1951 to March 1952 for immersion in intensive study of Swedish folklore and folklife methods. He first worked on a farm, learning the language in the context of rural community life. He attended the International Congress of European and Western Ethnology at Stockholm, and made contact with a range of scholars and with the analytical and theoretical approaches being applied there and elsewhere. He became acquainted with the system of archiving developed in the Dialect and Folklore Archive at Uppsala, which he took back to the School and where it was adopted and adapted for Scottish use. He studied with Professor Dag Strömbäck and others, and worked with archive staff in developing questionnaires and comparative data, returning to Scotland impressed, as his report tells, by the scholarship, courtesy and kindness of those who had trained him there.

The early days were marked by outreach to the regions of Scotland and beyond. Contacts made at the first Viking Congress, held in Shetland in 1950, were followed up and at a conference held in Lewis and Oban in 1953 under the auspices of the British Council and the University of Glasgow, School of Scottish Studies staff were joined by scholars from many countries to focus attention on Scottish folklore and folklife. Alexander Fenton, who would become Director of the School and the first Chair of Scottish Ethnology in 1990, but following National Service had begun his career as Senior Assistant Editor on the *Scottish National Dictionary* before moving into the museum world in 1959, helped prepare early questionnaires, allying words and things according to ethnological principles. The links with lexicography were strong and practical ones once the School was based at 27 George Square, for it was joined there by the Scottish National Dictionary and Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue projects, under David Murison (1913–1997) and A J (Jack) Aitken (1921–1998) respectively, where these were able to derive mutual benefit from the School's library and the sharing of expertise.

Calum Maclean was soon joined by the musicologist Francis Collinson (1898–1984), who had been working closely with John Lorne Campbell of Canna and whose Research Fellowship remit was music, particularly though not exclusively instrumental, and by Audrey Henshall, whose focus was archaeology and who was succeeded by Ian Whitaker. Shortly after, Hamish Henderson (1919–2002) added to the international ethos which has characterised the School from the start.

His experience before and during the Second World War had helped shape in him an inclusive approach to the cultures of Europe and to Scotland's place in their context. He was hired as a field collector in the first instance and subsequently became a Research Fellow, concentrating on travellers (Scots and Gaelic-speaking), agricultural workers in the north-east and others in contexts both rural and urban. The first Social Anthropology Research Fellow was the Canadian Frank Vallee (1918–1999), who was followed by Farnham Rehfisch and by Trefor Owen

Hamish Henderson with Alexander Stewart (Ali Dall) and family (Robert Botsford)

from Wales. Place-name studies were represented first by Winifred Temple and from 1956 to 1969 by W F H (Bill) Nicolaisen. James Ross had a specific Gaelic song remit, which John MacInnes was to take up. Kenneth Goldstein (1927–1995) came from the USA as a Fulbright Scholar to record the balladry of the north-east at the end of the decade. Ill health prevented him from taking up an invitation in the 1990s to be an honoured Visiting Professor of Ethnology in the School.

The School's foundational document made clear the necessity of creating a research library of books and journals including comparative materials from relevant cultures. From its earliest days it became a focus for donations of relevant volumes and indeed gifts of entire collections,

W F H (Bill) Nicolaisen on place-name fieldwork

ensuring a resource both deep and broad for supporting its work, its research visitors and its collections. Its library holdings extend back in time in addition to the acquisitions made since 1951 and include many items from other cultures which are unique in the United Kingdom. As soon as this became possible journal exchanges were established with its own publications, ensuring that similar institutes in other countries built up a comparative Scottish resource.

James Ross with Nan MacKinnon, Vatersay

Catherine MacInnes dyeing wool with crotal, Loch Carnan, South Uist
(Werner Kissling)

In similar fashion the sound, photographic and manuscript archives have from 1951 been the recipients of gifts such as the photographs taken in the 1930s in the Outer Hebrides by the German anthropologist Werner Kissling (1895–1988), who also undertook some work commissioned by the School, and by Robert Atkinson in St Kilda and other islands following the evacuation of the population in 1930 but at a time when some St Kildans were still returning in the summers to their homes there. LP and tape collections of great interest have been donated and the artist Keith Henderson (1883–1982) gifted his iconic paintings, a small study and a large depiction, of a Barra waulking to the department.

It is not ideal to run an institute by committee, especially one composed of members who were in the main professors with their own departments to superintend, no matter how supportive their intentions. Again Sweden came to the aid of the School, in this instance through a visit by Professor Åke Campbell. The invitation issued to him by the University of Edinburgh marked the start of a programme – The Northern Scholars Scheme – which still continues, a contribution to the life of the university instigated by the School of Scottish Studies early in its history, to bring scholars from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland (extended to the Baltic countries more recently) to share expertise and promote joint research.

In October and November 1955 Campbell was invited to come to give lectures and also, importantly, to advise on the future organisation and activities of the School of Scottish Studies and the systematic investigation of the folk culture of Scotland. In his Report he made two strong recommendations to the university: that a Director should be appointed and that an academic journal should be established in order to disseminate the research of the School. By 1957 both of these were in place. And just had been the case from the time the School was first mooted, there was interest in the press about its activities.

Basil Megaw (1913–2002) was appointed to the Directorship of the School in that year and the scholarly journal *Scottish Studies*, for which plans were in fact well advanced by the time of Campbell's visit, began to appear. Megaw, an Ulsterman, came to the School from the Isle of Man,

Cartoon from The Scotsman, 21/9/57 (cartoon published by courtesy of Scotsman Publications)

where he had been Director of the Manx Museum. An archaeologist and anthropologist by education and profession, he was a strong advocate of field work, of scholarly collaboration and the dissemination of research findings. He was keen that teaching should figure in the programme of the School, suggesting that "Scottish Ethnology" would be a desirable name for any teaching programme or degree. A photo shows him on field work in Smearisary in the north-west Highlands, leading a combined field project gathering data on oral traditions, land use, buildings and way of life through sound recordings and photographs, undertaken by the School in 1959.

He was also instrumental in organising a series of symposia which enabled scholars from Scotland, elsewhere in the UK and beyond to

interact and which contributed to the contents of early issues of *Scottish Studies*. He gave great encouragement to the creation of the Society for Folk Life Studies in 1961 and its journals *Gwerin* and later *Folk Life*, and to the Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group (founded 1972).

The Second Decade: 1961–1970

The first decade of the School's life was one of energetic activity, with field work contributing a wealth of holdings to the sound and photographic archives from across Scotland. The activities of the School

Basil Megaw on field work in Smearisary

were reported in the press and field work responded whenever possible to pressures and threats experienced by Scottish communities. Special attention was paid to Benbecula and South Uist, for example, when the rocket range was proposed. Indeed a campaign to prevent it was supported by School staff.

No one was more devoted to this work than Calum Maclean, but his career was cut short cruelly by cancer, though he did not allow this to deter him from field work, and he died in 1960. By then Stewart Sanderson had left to head up the Folk Life Survey at the University of Leeds, Ian Whitaker had departed for Memorial University of Newfoundland and Francis Collinson had retired. Of the 1950s appointments Henderson, Nicolaisen, MacInnes and Megaw carried on into the 1960s, a period of expansion and consolidation. As throughout the School's story, volunteer supporters played a role, including Robert Kerr, who had been secretary to the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society from the 1930s and who did archive-related work for several years in the early 1960s.

Some research staff took up appointments for several years only, such as Anne Ross (1925–2012), working on custom and belief early in the decade, others for slightly longer, including Iain Crawford (Material Culture), there from 1960 to 1969, and Thorkild Knudsen, Danish ethnomusicologist, while others hired then were to contribute to the work of the School for many years: Morag MacLeod, Gaelic Song specialist, Donald Archie MacDonald (1929–1999), who succeeded Maclean, from 1962 to 1994, Alan Bruford (1937–1995) to be Research Archivist from 1965, Ian Fraser to assist Nicolaisen in the Scottish Place Name Survey, Eric Cregeen (1921–1983) in Social Organisation, and Peter Cooke, ethnomusicologist, from 1969. Daphne Hamilton was appointed in 1965 to assist with the editing of *Scottish Studies*.

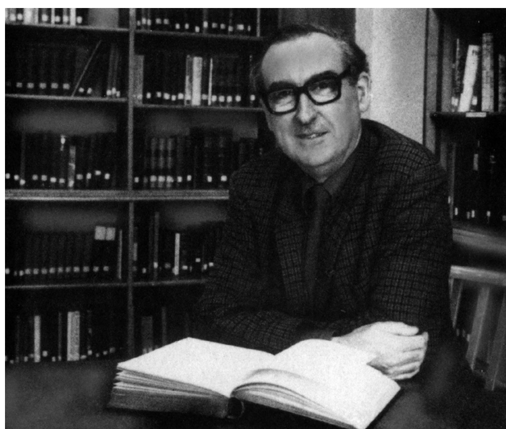
Staff hired as text or music transcribers or in a secretarial role often fulfilled further roles as valued field workers and research assistants, or went on from the School to careers elsewhere. These included James Porter and also Ailie Munro (1918–2002), who worked in the School from 1968 to 1982 and published on the Folk Song Revival. Ian Paterson

(1916–1990), a native of the island of Berneray, was responsible for many recordings between 1966 and 1984, and Mary MacDonald (1911–1999), who assisted in the sound archive from 1961 to 1978, will be referred to again in connection with *Tocher*. Cathie Scott contributed in a massive way from 1968 onwards to the development of the specialist Tale Archive. High technical standards were achieved and maintained in recordings for the sound archive in studio or in the field by Sandy Folkarde and, for thirty-two years, by Fred Kent (1932–1998).

The 1960s saw moves to integrate the School, which was continuing to report to the university administration through Senatus, into the Faculty of Arts, though this was not fully accomplished until later in the decade. Teaching and finance were the issues here. There was an interest in providing undergraduate lectures for existing courses in established degrees and a postgraduate diploma course was also planned. LPs added to *Scottish Studies* as outputs.

School staff have long been instrumental in both the creation and the support of interdisciplinary bodies drawing on the interests and expertise of both professional academics and lay people. The Society for Folk Life Studies (founded 1961) was one of these and in the 1960s and 1970s several more came into being, including the Scottish Society for Northern Studies (1968), the Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group (1972) and the Scottish Oral History Group (1978). Staff have also been regular attenders at the conferences of the organisations bringing ethnologists together from many countries such as the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR), the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA), the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), and the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF). They were also foundational members of the network of British and Irish Sound Archives (BISA).

In 1969 Basil Megaw retired as Director of the School, though he continued a close connection with the School as an Honorary Fellow to the end of his life. Professor John MacQueen assumed this role in that year, moving from the Department of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh, where he held the Masson Chair of Medieval English and



John MacQueen in the School Library

Scottish Literature, and bringing with him in addition interests in place-names and saints' narratives, and a family background in the south-west of Scotland. In 1972 he was named to a Personal Chair of Scottish Literature and Oral Tradition.

The Third Decade: 1971–1980

When the School celebrated its attainment of adulthood, its 21st anniversary, in 1972 it had begun to move into a range of new activities. A grant from The Gannochy Trust facilitated the purchase of 16mm filming equipment and projects began to be carried out both in a studio based within the department and in the field. Amongst the first was a *luadh* session, recreated in South Uist and involving women who had all participated in the process when younger.

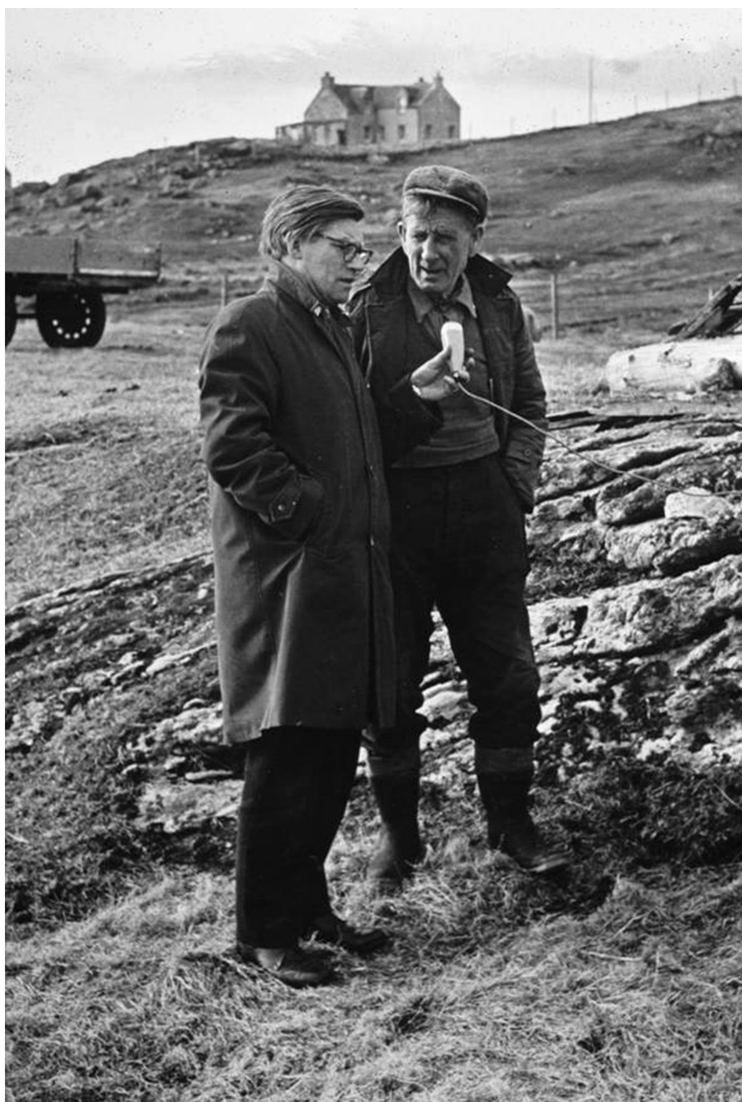
Later an outdoor service of adult baptism in a stream running through the centre of the island was filmed on the island of Tiree. In Shetland, fiddling and dancing in home and in hall were recorded, while singing and storytelling in Scots and in Gaelic formed several important projects, capturing the important performance components of gesture and facial expression as well as the words, melodies and context. Craft

subjects included Shetland kishie-making. In time video format was introduced.

The year 1971 saw the launch of *Tocher*, an innovative archive publication presenting for the first time transcriptions from the sound archive in an accessible format for readers of all ages, supported by translations where required, photographs and notes. It was the inspiration of Mary MacDonald, archive assistant, a native of Islay who had lived as well on the island of Barra and who knew how much it meant in the communities in which material was collected to have ready access to it. She supported editor Alan Bruford in its production for many years.

The *Scottish Tradition* LP series began to be published, first by Tangent Records, and now by Greentrax Recordings Limited, overseen by Peter Cooke, providing another form of welcome access to archive holdings. Each LP was accompanied by a full brochure with extensive notes based on research into the subject featured, be it an individual singer, the instrumental and vocal music of a particular region or a genre of oral tradition, from the bothy ballads of the north-east to the psalm singing of the Hebrides.

South Uist luadh *(filmed)*



Eric Cregeen recording Lachlan MacNeill, Grimsay

A break-through was made into securing research council funding in the form of grants to Eric Cregeen (1921–1983) for field collecting and archival research on the history and traditions of the island of Tiree in the 18th and 19th centuries by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), later the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). He was also instrumental in the founding of the Scottish Oral History Group in 1978, as the core source of the School's collections, the oral transmission of both inherited tradition and individual experience, came to be recognised as a vital form of evidence for historians and others.

Undergraduate teaching in the form of the School's own courses, at first and second-year level, in Oral Literature and Popular Tradition, was fostered in the 1970s and the supervision of research for postgraduate degrees of M.Litt and PhD. The Postgraduate Diploma in Scottish Studies was to be replaced later by the Master of Science (MSc), of similar 12-month duration, as an appropriate prelude to PhD work.

The Fourth Decade: 1981–1990

It was in this decade that the full Scottish Ethnology degree came into being, using the name first suggested by Basil Megaw two decades earlier.

Alan Bruford with postgraduate students

Two members of staff were appointed with a remit additional to a specialist topic within the discipline, namely Custom and Belief (Margaret Bennett) and Social Organisation (Margaret Mackay), of shaping the four-year programme and ensuring that it had the needed teaching resources. The archive collections were at the heart of the degree, as they have continued to be, a laboratory for the study of ethnology and for the training of new generations of ethnologists and others with the transferable skills required for field work, interviewing, recording, transcribing, indexing, and applying theoretical and analytical approaches in comparative ways in keeping with the subject internationally.

Research projects were introduced from the first year, with students (both school-leavers and mature students) finding a sense of excitement and liberation in the discovery that their family traditions or topics in their own localities were valid sources of evidence for university study, encouraged by their teachers to, as the Swedes put it, "Dig where you stand". Projects and dissertations were deposited in the archive, adding themes of contemporary import and including work on the ethnic diversity which characterises Scotland in our own time as well as in the past. This has continued year on year. Joint degrees were established with appropriate subjects – Scottish History, Celtic, Archaeology, English Language and English Literature (with their strong Scots Language and Scottish Literature components), Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies – as well as the Single Honours Scottish Ethnology degree.

In order to expedite communication and represent this interdisciplinary outlook a Board of Scottish Studies was created, with Margaret Mackay as its first Chair, to involve membership from across the subjects in the degrees and beyond. It was intimately associated with the "Studying Scotland at Edinburgh" initiative of the 1980s and 1990s, aimed at outreach to those at home and further afield interested in exploring Scottish subjects at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The 1980s saw the start of the publication in eight volumes of the *Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection* in association with the University of Aberdeen. This project, editing the songs – over three thousand texts and tunes – collected in the north-east of Scotland in the early years of

the twentieth century by Gavin Greig (1856–1914) and the Reverend James Bruce Duncan (1848–1917), was undertaken initially by Patrick Shuldham-Shaw (1917–1977). He was succeeded in the General Editorship by Emily Lyle, who ensured that the work was brought to completion in 2002 with the assistance of other scholars of Scots song, many of them exponents of the tradition themselves, who were involved with her as editors of the volumes. It provides an immensely rich resource for performance, study and further publications.

Ian MacKenzie (1958–2009) was appointed to the staff of the School in 1985 as photographic technician in succession to Ralph Morton and Leslie Davenport, and was instrumental in stimulating the photographic work of students as the new degrees developed and through his own work and that which he carried out on field work in collaboration with other staff augmented the holdings of the photographic archive in creative ways. This was also a period which saw the School called on to advise on oral history projects sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission and others, and subsequent donations to the sound archive of the fruits of such work.

The end of this decade saw the retirement of John MacQueen as Director of the School of Scottish Studies in 1988 and the appointment of Alexander Fenton (1929–2012) as the first Professor of Scottish Ethnology from 1989 to 1994. His connection with the School of Scottish Studies had been a long one, from the early days of preparing questionnaires and his work on the *Scottish National Dictionary* through a distinguished career in the Museum of Antiquities (subsequently the Museum of Scotland), where he became Director and where he also fostered the development of the Scottish Ethnological/Scottish Life Archive, the Scottish Agricultural Museum and the European Ethnological Research Centre.

The Fifth Decade: 1991–2000

One very pleasing aspect of this decade was the fact that the staff of the School began to include graduates of its own unique Scottish Ethnology degree programme, when Rhona Talbot was appointed to assist in the

sound archive from 1993 to 2001 and Gary West to be a Lecturer in Scottish Ethnology from 1994. Mark Trewin took up a cross appointment between the School and the Faculty of Music in the same year. Following Sandy Fenton's retirement in 1994, Margaret Mackay was appointed Director of the School and she co-ordinated a programme which brought a series of internationally eminent ethnologists and folklorists as Visiting Professors of Ethnology to the department over the next five years. Each brought her or his special area or areas of expertise to the School, contributing as relevant to undergraduate courses in years one and two and teaching an honours course which incorporated theory, methods and material in their own specialism. They were resource persons for students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels as well as for staff and each

Alexander (Sandy) Fenton

made good use of the School's archival holdings for comparative material in their own individual subjects.

Over this period the School welcomed Professor W F H Nicolaisen, who had returned to Scotland and the University of Aberdeen after a sojourn in the USA from 1969, on place-names and folkloristics, Professor Linda Dégh from the University of Indiana, on oral narrative, Professor Bjarne Stoklund from the University of Copenhagen on material culture and social organisation, Professor Nils-Arvid Bringéus of the University of Lund on *bildlore* (the use of visual sources) and the ethnology of religious expression, and Professor Åse Enerstvedt from Norway on childlore and children's culture.

Work was also carried out in 29 George Square to upgrade the analogue tape storage area with rolling metal shelving and heat and humidity controls to meet appropriate British Standards for such holdings. Continuing professional development for archive staff was instituted and formal recognition was gained for the School of Scottish Studies Library as a research resource sitting alongside the School's archival collections and as a constituent part of the University of Edinburgh Library system and the university's collections. Importantly, with both inspiration and practical support from John Smith and other colleagues in the university's computing services division, the PEARL project was launched. With its title an acronym for Providing Ethnological Resources for Research and Learning, PEARL pioneered the provision of original sound items selected from those published from the archive in *Tocher* and thus already in the public domain and enabling the testing of technological approaches which were to assist the development of *Tobar an Dualchais* (The Well of Heritage)/Kist o Riches in the next decade.

The School and in particular its archives, to which he had devoted so many years as Research Archivist, editor of *Tocher*, scholar, teacher and latterly Reader in Scottish Ethnology, made the decision to sponsor an annual lecture in memory and honour of Alan Bruford following his sudden death in 1995. It continues to take place at the Scottish International Storytelling Festival each autumn as a means of outreach for the archives and for scholarship associated with various forms of narrative.

The Sixth Decade: 2001–2011

Two main features dominate the story of the School of Scottish Studies in this decade. One of these is the re-structuring of the University of Edinburgh and the emergence of new patterns of decision-making and governance. A prelude to this came with the merger of Celtic and Scottish Studies into a single subject area, headed by Professor William Gillies of Celtic, with Donald Meek appointed as Professor of Scottish and Gaelic Studies. Margaret Mackay became Director of the School of Scottish Studies Archives. Faculties and departments were abolished and in their stead three Colleges were created, Humanities and Social Science, Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, and Science and Engineering. Within each College, Schools, each with its head, were instituted, with the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures embracing Celtic and Scottish Studies.

The other feature is the development of online provision of archive resources. During this period an exciting new development, building on the PEARL Project of the 1990s and utilising digital technology in new ways, came to fruition after preparatory years and fundraising in the earlier decade. *Tobar an Dualchais*/Kist o Riches is a partnership of archive-holders, The School of Scottish Studies, BBC Radio and The National Trust for Scotland (Campbell of Canna Collection) co-ordinated by Sabhal Mòr Ostaig (University of the Highlands and Islands) for ensuring preservation of and access to three major collections of Gaelic and Scots oral tradition.

Martin MacIntyre was responsible for co-ordinating its development and fund-raising, Mairead MacDonald for the direction of the project once launched and special mention should be made of John Shaw, who was appointed to the School in 1996 and who recognised early the potential for community development in a project of this kind. Major funding was provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other sources, with assistance, both monetary and in kind, from the three archive-holders. Work commenced in 2006 and the website was launched in December 2010, as a timely prelude to the start of the year celebrating

the sixtieth anniversary – the diamond jubilee – of the founding of the School of Scottish Studies in 1951. The digitisation of analogue tapes (and wire recordings in the case of some of the Campbell of Canna material) was allied to an innovative programme of work by community cataloguers, working on archive materials recorded in their own home districts.

John Shaw also directed a further innovative web-based project in this period, enabling electronic access to the extensive Calum Maclean Collection, with a major grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), while a project based on the collections of Alexander Carmichael, the Carmichael Watson Project, supported by The Leverhulme Trust and the AHRC, links the department and Special Collections in the University of Edinburgh Library.

The European Ethnological Research Centre moved from the National Museums of Scotland to Celtic and Scottish Studies in 2006 and staffed by Kenneth Veitch and Mark Mulhern and directed by Gary West, carries out its work of placing Scottish research in a European and wider context through the publication of the magisterial fourteen-volume *Scottish Life and Society: A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology,* the journal *Review of Scottish Culture (ROSC),* and its *Flashback* series.

In this decade Neill Martin, Katherine Campbell and Will Lamb were appointed to the teaching and research staff, with remits in Custom and Belief, Instrumental Music and Scots Song, and Oral Narrative and Gaelic Song respectively, and Cathlin Macaulay to responsibilities in the archives. An Artist in Residence scheme was established to allow opportunities for exponents of the expressive arts to engage with students and staff and to explore the riches of the archives for their own purposes.

Amongst the various ways in which the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the School of Scottish Studies is being marked, including this conference, for which we are very grateful to the Islands Book Trust, tested and new forms of outreach figure strongly. These include Artists in Residence and special Archive Trails artists' projects, concerts, exhibitions, talks, lectures, symposia, sound installations, radio and television broadcasts, publications and press articles, a new CD in the Scottish Tradition series, "Songs and Ballads from Perthshire Field Recordings in

the 1950s", and filmed translations into British Sign Language (BSL) of two tales from the sound archive.

And as in every year since its creation in 1951, students at all levels, artists and other performers, scholars from home and abroad, publishers and broadcasters, all with an interest in Scotland's people, languages and cultures, continue to find the lasting legacy of the School of Scottish Studies in collections, resources and expertise which are both unique and ever-growing, as dynamic as Scotland itself. The Hindu festival of Diwali as celebrated in Inverness and the Lammas-tide Burryman procession in South Queensferry, new songs by Scottish songmakers as well as tunes heard in years gone by are here – and so the carrying stream flows on.

Notes

Material for this overview was gathered from papers in the School of Scottish Studies Archives, private papers consulted with permission, and interviews with former staff members. Volume XI, page 895, of the signed minutes of the Edinburgh University Senatus Academicus includes the University Court's approval of the creation of the School of Scottish Studies as outlined in the memorandum printed in an appendix to the same volume at page 195 ff.

Dates are given, where known, for individuals who have passed away. Apart from the holders of chairs, titles have not been provided.

All photographs are from the Archives of the School of Scottish Studies unless otherwise indicated.

Readers will find the following websites useful:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/celtic-scottish-studies

http://www.celtscot.ed.ac.uk/calum-maclean

http://www.carmichaelwatson.lib.ed.ac.uk

http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk

http://www.kistoriches.co.uk

Kindling Ancient Memory / a' beothachadh na cuimhne aosda

Cailean Maclean

Cailean Maclean was born and brought up in the Outer Hebrides and now lives on the Isle of Skye. He is a Gaelic speaker with considerable experience of working in the media through the medium of the language. Apart from a programme which he produces each week for Radio nan Gàidheal he has been involved in many other radio projects, most recently two series of six programmes based on walks he and a colleague undertook through Skye in 2010 and in small islands in the Inner Hebrides in 2011. In addition Cailean has been running radio training courses on a voluntary basis for Cuillin FM, a Skye-based community station. Cailean has also been involved in television productions for BBC Alba and in 2011 worked on a seven-part series exploring the world of bagpiping.

In the recent past he was a partner in a publishing company which produced around twenty titles, mostly related to the history and culture of the Hebrides. A record producing company he runs with another colleague has published over 50 CDs, the best part of which feature Gaelic and piping performances.

He has edited, written or project managed several books and a number based on Cailean's photography have been published. His recent book Suas gu Deas *(published by the Islands Book Trust), on which he collaborated with Angus Peter Campbell, was named 'Gaelic Book of the Year' at the Royal National Mod of 2010. He also collaborated with the Islands Book Trust in the publication in 2012 of a new edition of* The History of Skye*, a book written by his grandmother's brother.*

He has taken a great interest in the work of his uncle, Calum Iain Maclean. Cailean assisted Mainstream Publishing Company with the production of the third and fourth edition of Calum Iain's classic book, The Highlands*. Cailean also helped in the production of a 13-part series of radio programmes largely based on Calum Iain's diaries for the period when he worked with the Irish Folklore Commission and the early years of his involvement with the School of Scottish Studies.*

Patrick MacDonald in his preface to Highland Vocal Airs, published in 1791, made an interesting statement about folklore collection, at least that part of it relating to folk music:

> *In less than twenty years it would be vain to attempt a collection of Highland music. Perhaps it is rather late at present, but enough may be got to point out its genius and spirit.*

It seems that every collector who ever worked in the Highlands reckoned that he or she was too late in starting and that most of the material that was of any value had already gone with the tradition bearers to the grave.

Yet the fact of the matter is that over the 200 or so years from Patrick MacDonald's pronouncement about the limited opportunities there were for collection, there have been numerous and very successful efforts to gather and save for posterity vast quantities of precious material from Gaelic culture. So, to paraphrase Mark Twain, rumours of the death of Highland music and indeed Gaelic folklore have been greatly exaggerated.

In his splendid book, *Companion to Gaelic Scotland*, Derick Thomson looked back at the these efforts and was able to divine a geographical pattern in them which, excepting a couple of the earlier collections of the Book of the Dean of Lismore and the Fernaig Manuscript, reflect the retreat of Gaelic in Scotland. The 18th century collections feature researchers in the Perthshire area, in the 19th century the focus had moved northwards and westwards to include Badenoch, Argyll, Easter Ross and Skye. In the 20th century the focus of much collection was in the Western Isles but not exclusively.

In this paper I would like to talk about the work of Calum Iain Maclean, who, in the 1940s, undertook a lot of work in the Western Isles, particularly Barra, South Uist and Benbecula, before becoming the first full-time collector employed by the School of Scottish Studies. He started work in Lochaber in early 1951. Calum, my father's brother, was born in Raasay in 1915. He was one of five boys and two girls and his father, also a Calum, was a tailor.

Having survived a serious bout of the 'flu whose pandemic just after WWI caused so much death and misery, he enrolled at the local public school (where he was registered as Malcolm Maclean). Thereafter he went to secondary school in Portree. It seems that from an early age he was particularly interested in things Celtic, particularly the team from the east

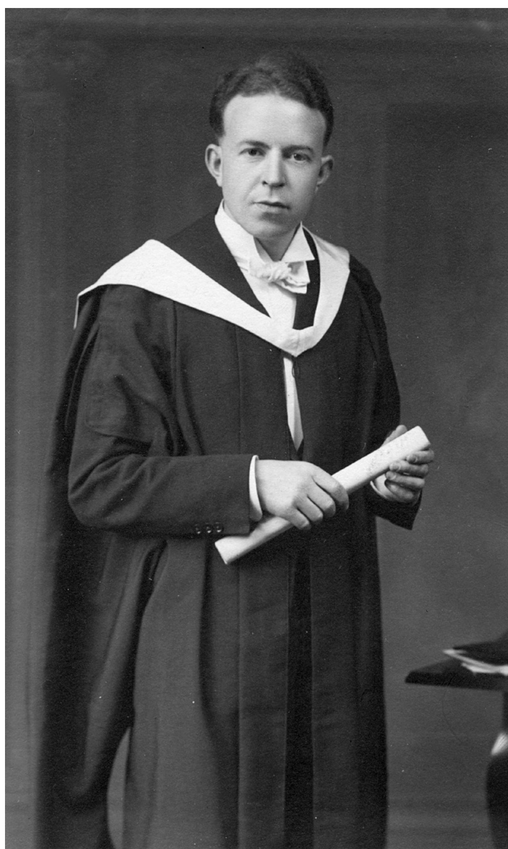
end of Glasgow who play in green and white hooped jerseys. His love of that team might have been unusual in Presbyterian Raasay.

The Portree School magazine of 1935 features an article by Calum on old Skye customs and a poem on the general topic of Scottish independence. Both things – folklore and Scottish independence – were to remain of great interest to him during his short life.

Calum's older brothers Somhairle and Johnnie were already very interested in old songs and had done a bit of collecting in an informal sense from people in Raasay and his uncle Alex (Alex Nicolson) was a serious collector of lore. He was a lecturer in Gaelic at Jordanhill College, and among other things published a Gaelic Grammar, a comprehensive history of his native island and a collection of Gaelic riddles and enigmas. And there were others in the family who had a deep interest in Gaelic folklore, but as informants rather than collectors. So, that Calum developed an interest in this field was perhaps not surprising.

In 1935 he matriculated at Edinburgh University and studied Celtic, with Latin as a secondary subject. While in Edinburgh, he stayed in digs in Polwarth Terrace. He shared a room with Allan Norman MacLean from Scarp, an island on the west side of Harris, who told me that Calum, as well as being a much more serious student than he was, took a great interest in politics. He was a nationalist and would on occasion deliver speeches extolling the virtues of independence in the Old Quadrangle; it seems that students would get on their soapboxes in the Old Quadrangle at that time. Allan recalled him being particularly abusive to Sir Thomas Holland, who had been appointed Principal of the University after many years in Empire Service. Poor Sir Thomas happened to appear in the Old Quad when Calum was in full flight and he was given dogs' abuse.

Despite this, Calum graduated on Friday 30th June 1939 with a first class degree in Celtic and Latin. The ceremony in the McEwan Hall probably was not to Calum's taste, certainly in terms of its musical content. Not only was God Save the King sung but, curiously, students were invited to sing a range of songs including Billy Boy, Ilkley Moor, Macnamara's Band and Clementine.



Calum on graduation day, Edinburgh University in 1939

Calum had considered the possibility of doing teacher training in Glasgow. He certainly sent for the prospectus for the Glasgow Training Centre but the accompanying application form was never completed. Instead, he went to Ireland. He was awarded the Macpherson and McCaig scholarships and this allowed him to go to the University College of Dublin to study Early Irish, and Mediaeval and Modern Welsh.

So Calum went to Dublin in the autumn of 1939, just about the time War was breaking out in Europe. This was hardly an auspicious time to

be starting any university course – I am not certain how much of it he completed but according to Sean O' Sullivan, the scholarships dried up and Calum was left with the choice of coming back to Scotland or trying to make ends meet in Ireland. He chose the latter and among other things he took a job in Clonmel in a pram factory but that came to an end when the factory shut due to supply shortages during wartime.

He also became a Catholic while in Clonmel and he was confirmed in Limerick. Tomas de Bhaldraithe, a scholar and a lexicographer, who knew Calum in Ireland, told me that the Bishop would use such occasions to exact a pledge against strong drink from his flock and Calum took the pledge the day he was baptized. It did not last long because that very night he and another who had taken the pledge that day went out on the randan in Limerick.

By 1942 he was in Connemara and living with the Dillon family in Indreabhan just to the west of Galway City. It was at this point he contacted the Irish Folklore Commission, a letter to Sean O' Sullivan actually, and was taken on as a part-time collector and was paid for whatever he could collect. Between August 1942 and February 1945 he sent the Commission over 2,300 manuscript pages of south Connemara lore. As far as I am aware the collecting he undertook was done using an Ediphone and transcribing in copybooks which were then posted to Dublin. Calum's main informant in Connemara was Maithiu Mor O Tuathail who gave him a large number of tales, some of which were of the international variety, some from the heroic Gaelic world and others from local lore or *seanchas*. He also collected songs from a local bard called Padraic O Fineadha – they formed the basis of a thesis he presented to University College Dublin and with which he got another MA. Calum had some income while in Connemara, but I am sure a large part of his keep at the Dillons was paid for in kind. According to Jude Dillon, the daughter of the household, he used to help on the land, cutting seaweed for fertiliser, lifting peat, sowing potatoes and the like. Jude told me he was a dab hand with the donkey. Jude loaned him her bicycle so he could visit informants and she said he often wrote out material into the copy books until the early hours of the morning – she said he got £2 for every copy book he filled with material.

Tomas de Bhaldraithe knew Calum in Connemara and he told me that during wartime paraffin shortages meant that many evenings there was no light by which to work.

Around 1943 Calum made a series of five or six broadcasts from Ireland in Scottish Gaelic in which he spoke of the importance of folklore, tradition and so forth. There was also evidence in the scripts of his continuing interest in independence for Scotland. The scripts are still available but Radio Eireann had no record of them being broadcast though Somhairle, another uncle, remembered hearing one of them while convalescing in hospital in Inverness after having been damaged by a land mine in the North African desert.

Sometime before around the end of 1944 beginning of 1945 Sean O'Sullivan and Seumas O Delargy the head of the Commission in Dublin invited Calum to Dublin to meet them. They seemed to get on well together because out of that meeting Calum was invited to join the Dublin staff of the Commission. He started work there in April 1945 and for the next few months Sean O' Sullivan taught him their system of cataloguing folklore.

Seumas O Delargy was very interested in the Scottish dimension of Gaelic folklore. He had been in Barra in 1919 and was impressed with what he heard there. He was also convinced that the study of Irish folklore would never be complete without recognition of what was available in Scotland. So to start with Calum was set the task of card indexing Scottish Gaelic material from printed sources such as John Lorne Campbell's *Sia Sgeulachdan* and the works of John Francis Campbell. It appears that the publication of John Lorne Campbell's *Sia Sgeulachdan* was one of the principal factors in awaking the Irish Folklore Commission to the strength of the Gaelic Oral Tradition in the Outer Hebrides. Calum also worked on 364 manuscript pages of material supplied to the Commission by Donald MacDonald of Eriskay who collected material in his native island in 1933 while a student at Glasgow University.

The next step was to send Calum on a preliminary expedition as a collector for the Commission to Scotland. That was in December 1945. Delargy was insistent that every collector should keep a diary of what they

were doing, who they were seeing, difficulties, and so forth in addition to the material they were transcribing. The diaries Calum kept are in Dublin and are an extremely interesting record of the life of a collector. They were originally written in Irish but as time went on he reverted to Scottish Gaelic. About 400 pages of material were recorded during the first expedition to Scotland and thereafter Calum returned to Dublin to carry on cataloguing.

In June 1946 he had been persuaded by Delargy to return to Scotland for a sustained period of collection. He agreed but his diary reveals he was reluctant to leave Ireland:

> *June 22nd*
>
> *At six o'clock in the evening, I boarded a ship on my way to Scotland. Although the weather was beautiful I was very lonely to leave Ireland. I love everything in Ireland, Ireland the delightful and lovely. I remained on the upper deck until the mountains of Wicklow faded from sight.*

He went back to Raasay initially where he collected more folklore. Then he went to Eigg and subsequently to Canna where he received encouragement and generous help from John Lorne Campbell.

In September he headed for Barra and South Uist. He was there effectively for the next four years and many of the 9,000 manuscript pages he collected were of material he collected in Barra and South Uist. It was here three of the four individuals who impressed him most lived – James MacKinnon or Seumas Iain Ghunnaraigh, a Barra-man, one of whose stories is featured in Sia Sgeulachdan; Angus MacMillan or Aonghas Barrach; and Duncan MacDonald or Donnchadh mac Dhòmhnaill 'ac Dhonnchaidh.

Seumas Ennis, a colleague from Dublin, came to visit and work with him for a while. The reason for Ennis' visit was primarily to get a permanent sound record of some of Calum's informants. To do this they used a Presto Recorder which recorded audio straight onto disc. Seumas and Calum also spent time with John Lorne Campbell in Canna working on Ediphone cylinders he had made before the Second War

in Cape Breton and other places and which were now beginning to deteriorate. While there Calum recorded lore from a local man, Angus MacDonald, Aonghas Eachainn.

Alan Lomax also visited and wrote to Calum on July 12th 1951:

> *Your introductions and contacts in the Hebrides provided me with the most enjoyable and fruitful recording trip in years. I have never met a set of people I liked as well anywhere and the astonishing number of beautiful tunes that came pouring into the microphone completely astonished me. If all the rest of the tunes of the world were to be suddenly wiped out by an evil magician, the Hebrides could fill up the gap without half trying.*

When the School of Scottish Studies was set up in 1951 Calum was seconded from the Commission to the new institution, for a year in the first instance. In January 1951 he began his work in Lochaber. There he met John MacDonald who was the fourth informant who really impressed Calum.

Calum then spent the 1951–52 academic year in Uppsala University in Sweden. On his return his position with the School of Scottish Studies was confirmed. While in Sweden, Calum requested permission to buy a recording machine in readiness for his return. This request must have been granted, since in 1952 he reports that he travelled in Stratherrick with a Ferrograph machine. Unfortunately, he could not use it because there was no AC power there at the time.

He had already been recording in Badenoch in June 1952, immediately on his return from Sweden. In 1953 his diary tells us that he was in Conon Bridge, Glenelg, in South Uist, Benbecula and Barra again, Mull, Coll, Tiree, Jura, Islay, Colonsay, Luing, Moidart, Locheilside and Invergarry. In 1954 he spent a long period in Arisaig, Morar and Moidart and in August of that year he was in Shetland.

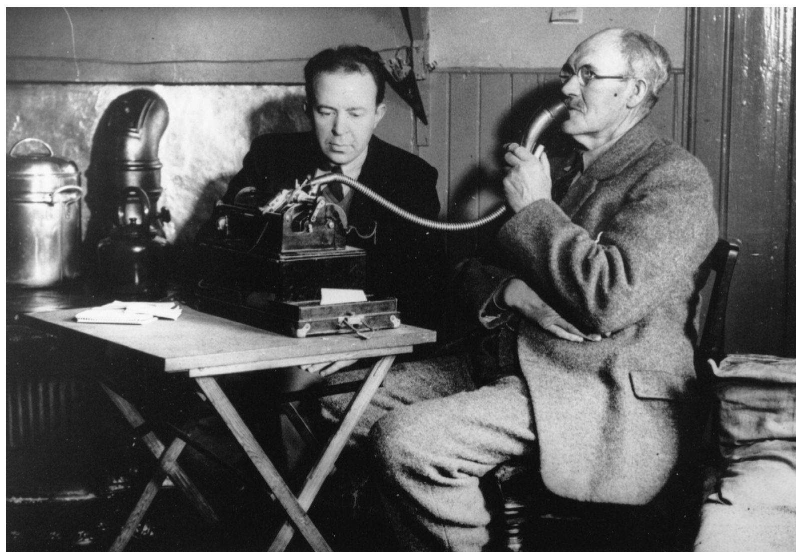
Towards the end of 1954 he was back in Dublin working on the manuscript material in the possession of the IFC, returning in May 1955. On his return to Scotland he visited Brora, Lairg, Wester Ross and Lochalsh. By this time he had been commissioned by Batsfords of London

to write a book on the Highlands. He had made a start on the book but its publication was delayed because of illness. He was suffering from cancer.

From April 1956 to September that year he was on sick leave. He went to work in the Borders, but returned due to exhaustion. A month later he returned to the Borders and it was during this field trip he met a Walter Elliot. His diary recalls:

> *I was quite astonished to find that several international folk tales are still told in the county of Selkirk. Mr Elliot has variants of the Aarne Thompson types 326, 1613 and 1791. Mr Elliot's telling of 1613 conforms to that of the Danish, Finnish and Finnish/Swedish versions of the tale.*

His arm was amputated in 1957 in an attempt to arrest the spread of the cancer. Undaunted, he returned to work that year and worked on tales in



Calum recording Angus MacMillan (Aonghas Barrach) on Ediphone, Benbecula c 1947

the Campbell of Islay manuscripts in the National Library. In the spring of 1958 he was back working in Lochaber and Lochalsh. Then to Benbecula, South Uist, Oban, Benderloch and Balquhidder, and in December 1958 he returned to Lochalsh.

His book *The Highlands* was published in 1959 and sold very quickly. But Calum died in August 1960 and was buried in Hallan in South Uist.

Hamish Henderson – the Art and Politics of a Folklorist

Timothy Neat

Timothy Neat is a writer, film maker, photographer, teacher and art historian. Part Scottish by descent, he was brought up in Cornwall. After an Honours Degree in Fine Art at the University of Leeds he moved to Scotland to take up a teaching post at Lendrick Muir School, Perthshire (a residential school for maladjusted children of high intelligence). From 1973 till 1988 he lectured in the History of Art at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee. Since 1988 he has worked as a film maker and author from his home in North Fife.

Neat has published numerous academic articles and reviews. His poetry has been published in Chapman, Cencrastus and other literary magazines. In 1993 he completed a major libretto for an opera entitled MACKINTOSH (developed with the assistance of Scottish Television).

Published books include his two volume biography of Hamish Henderson – Vol. 1, The Making of the Poet *(2007), and Vol. 2,* Poetry Becomes People *(2009).*

The hard way is the only way.
The worst enemy is acedia:
The great mental weakness, the failure to tackle it at the root.

HH, Poetry Notebook, 1949

It is an honour to speak here in celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the School of Scottish Studies. It is also an honour for me to speak about my old friend Hamish Henderson – recognised as one of the outstanding scholars to have worked at the School but also, I suggest, one of the great figures of Scottish history: a 20th century Modernist hero fit to stand with mythic figures like Calgacus, Columba, Duns Scotus, Wallace, Bruce, Montrose, Burns, John MacLean, Hugh MacDiarmid. If there is a dichotomy in this dual assessment, it raises questions this conference might address.

Hamish Henderson (1919–2002) became a professional folklorist in 1952 but long before that he was poet, a big artist, and Hamish could never divide his vision of 'the folk' from his vision of poetry and the public

good. For Hamish, folklore was a means rather than an end: it was a tool to achieve philosophical, philanthropic and artistic ends. With the courage of his surprising originality, Hamish used folklore as Michelangelo used marble, as Titian used paint, as Leonardo used chiaroscuro, as Brunelleschi used proportion, as Galileo used mathematics, as Turner used weather, as Shakespeare used the stage, as Homer and Michelet used national history, as Beethoven used his deafness, as Tolstoy used the Russian people, as Freud used libidinic analysis, as Bernard Leach used clay: – Hamish used folklore as his means of comprehending, honouring and changing the world, in his time. Folklore was the giant on whose shoulders he stood. Like Luther, he could do no other. His people's past was the vantage point from which he re-perceived their nation's future. As a boy of nine, Hamish's sense of destiny was apparent, even in the 'Irish Jokes' he wrote out in his mother's recipe book.

The wife and I went to a football match. During the play a man next to us kept on shouting – fifty-one thousand men, fifty-one thousand men. Fifty-one thousand men says I – what's the idea of fifty-one thousand men? Says he – fifty-one thousand men! So why did that pigeon pick on me?

Hamish was precocious and the values that would shape his life were established early. In 1928 he adapted a Burns quatrain, to honour one of his great, great grandfathers killed as a First Officer at the Battle of Trafalgar: it demonstrates the moral imperatives that drove him.

After the battle of Trafalgar – a Thanks-giving Service

Ye Hypocrits!
Mon be yer pranks
Tae murder men
And then give thanks.

Stop!
Go no further,
God won't accept
Yours thanks for murder.

Lifelong, Hamish would fight for common humanity against hypocrisy and for peace. Humour was native to him. Down-to-earth sexuality was there from the start:

One day a simple country girl
Stooped down to pick a lettuce,
A bumble bee came buzzing by
And said, shall us, let us!

Hamish's schoolboy poems owe much to folk tradition and a determined resistance to bourgeois values. Born illegitimate, he felt the full force of Victorian propriety, but brought up in Glenshee, in Highland Perthshire, Hamish knew himself part of the collective life of Auld Scotland. Flung-out of respectable society he felt himself tested, like a Spartan boy left overnight on the hillside. Such testing nurtured in him a Marxist/Darwinian vision of society and he seems to have intuitively comprehended, long before Richard Dawkins presented his theories to the world, that the 'selfish gene' is just part of a larger, 'unselfish' genome; that the selfless love of the she-wolf ('*My mother*,' he would say '*had a heart that would sink a battleship*!') is a fundamental aspect of the wider 'poetry' of the life he lived to celebrate.

'The Carrying Stream' is an old 'folk' phrase. Hamish gave it new meaning when he used it as a metaphor for the folklore process itself. His statements, 'The politics follows the culture' and 'Poetry becomes People' expand the concept to include all. For Hamish, folklore was never a narrow academic discipline but 'the proper study of mankind'; a truly human phenomenon that can provide a fulcrum for all modern humanist studies.

The Scotland of Hamish's boyhood was a land deeply scarred by war, depopulation, emigration, poverty, disease, urban decay, industrial decline and imperial self-centredness. By the early 1930s Hamish was using poetry and folklore as revolutionary tools to change a rotten *status quo*. His approach was many faceted. He looked back with a romantic Jacobite eye but, also, ruthlessly forwards. The spoken word – the great, neglected, oral tradition could, he believed, re-invigorate contemporary Scots poetry

(as Synge and Joyce, Hardy and Eliot had shown in Ireland and England) to the great benefit of the Scots people. Some things, he knew, could only exist and exist much more richly, within purely human intercourse as opposed to formal documentation. He notes: "*The oral tradition / The lived moment / Thrusting a rock in the craw of devouring time*."

Hamish sought to exult 'the humble lowly'. He sought to bring folklore out of the ghetto into which it had been flung by our increasingly institutionalised society, the rule of law, the absolute authority of the printed word. Any vital art, Hamish believed, needs to be continually renewed. The stale of yesterday is the yeast – the fresh bread – of the morrow. Hamish knew 'tradition' could easily degenerate into flaccid convention, and 'the tyranny of a gereocracy' but that 'living speech' was exactly that – and it was the folklorist's duty (the poet's duty) to use and build on the best of popular culture. He honoured those things which stood the test of time, that gave expression to permanent realities (his druidic, Celtic, Northern heritage) but he was very much a New Testament man, opposed to the 'killing times'. Indeed, his embrace of this 'folk' philosophy was so powerful that he was quite prepared to see his own career, as an art-poet, snuffed-out for the greater good of society. Some have questioned this self-destructive selflessness, but true originals cannot help themselves. In 1994, I read Hamish a section from my book, *PART SEEN, PART IMAGINED: Meaning and Symbolism in the Work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald*. It deals with originality, and it was clear he was moved by what he heard.

> *Strictly speaking there is no such thing as an original work or opinion. Facts do not change, the lights upon them do. What is known as originality therefore consists of bringing a new light to bear on some fact known to all before; and in the power of forcing others to recognise it as such. Everyone is original in the true sense of the word, but every mind has not this power of impressing itself upon other minds; of forcing them to see its light and no other… It is the focusing of light upon one point, commonly called the concentration of energy, which alone can bring general recognition of originality. Men and women are original*

> *only because they cannot help themselves. With the original character it is always, 'Here I stand for I can do no other'. No man ever yet did an original thing intentionally, your true original is unconscious… It is a great thing for a man to find out his own line and keep it. You get along so much faster on your own rail. It is not the amount of genius or moral power expended, but concentrated, that makes what the world calls a great man.*

These words, from Glasgow School of Art student Janet Aitken, were published in the GSA 'Magazine No.1' in April 1893, and Hamish seemed to recognise that the statement validated lifelong the stance he had taken. There can, however, be no doubt that Hamish, at times, wondered whether he had betrayed his genius by his promiscuous embrace of all that was folk – but he stuck to his last. And it interesting that the subject of Janet Aitken's article, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, used vernacular functionality as a base-camp for his brilliant architectural adventures, very much as Hamish was to use Scots traditional song, music, speech, rhyme and metaphor in his best creative work.

Hamish had a 'druidic' memory for words, poetry and song. The 19th century art critic John Ruskin exulted this capacity for 'total recall' and suggested that many of the world's great artists had thriven, not on the production of 'new fantasies', but on the involuntary summoning, at precisely the right moment, of things actually heard, seen, experienced. Writing of Dante, Tinteretto and Turner, Ruskin asks his readers to:

> *Imagine all that these men had seen or heard in the whole course of their lives, laid up accurately in their memories as in vast store houses, extending with the poets, even to the slightest intonations of syllables heard in the beginnings of their lives, and with the painters down to the minute folds of drapery, and shapes of leaves and stones; and over all this unindexed and immeasurable mass of treasure, the imagination brooding and wondering, but dream-gifted, so as to summon at any moment exactly such groups of ideas, as shall fit each other; this I conceive to be the nature of the imaginative mind.*

As a poet and folklorist Hamish had just that kind of mind. Such a mind can be problematical for academics and Hamish's 'dream-gifts' indeed proved problematic to some of his colleagues. For Hamish, folklore was an aspect of the brotherhood of man. He believed that renewed recognition of folk values in Scotland would sharpen social awareness, stimulate Scottish culture across the board and lead to political renewal. Ruskin also speaks eloquently of the local, the particular, the national – that underlies all pan-national achievement.

> *I am certain, that whatever is to be truly great and affecting must have on it the strong stamp of the native land: not a law this, a necessity… all classicality, all Middle-age patent-reviving, is utterly vain and absurd; if we are to do anything great, good, awful, religious, it must be out of our own little island, and out of this year 1846, railroads and all.*

As a schoolboy at Dulwich College in the 1930s Hamish was recognised as a talented classical scholar, a linguist, a historian but, even then, he consciously used his knowledge and skills as folk poet to advance his folkloristical thesis. For example, he was sixteen when he wrote the following ballad for his Clapham Orphanage magazine, 'The Raconteur'. It tells the story of a 'pilgrim youth' impelled to search-out an aged Picto-Gaelic seer/oracle, who, when found, entrusts the wanderer with the responsibility of renewing and carrying forward the cultural and political causes of his people. The pilgrim is the young Hamish, and with prophetic power he sets out the quest to which he was to dedicate his life. It is entitled 'Fellow Traveller' (1936). It is long but well worth reading.

> Sunk deep in brooding thoughts, I strode a-main
> O'er the rough track once cut deep in the moor
> – by the command of Angus, long ago,
> Before the Gaelic power was crushed to nought –
> But now o'ergrown with bracken and rank turf
> And heather, dry and bloomless, it was scarce
> Discernable even in that wilderness.

I lifted my eyes from time to time
To view the far blue hills of Fraech Og,
The longed-for goal of weary pilgrimage
Through this bleak, barren land towards the East.

At last I knew that e'er the moon was up,
Shedding her soft, sweet radiance on the hills,
I would be climbing, joyful in my heart,
The first smooth gentle slope of Ben na Craich;
And ere the first gleams of the dawn appeared –
In Kenneth's cave I, safe, would humbly kneel
And speak my mission to the forgotten seer
Who, once renowned throughout an hundred isles
For weird sixth sight and many prophecies,
Had wandered like our erstwhile lord, his king,
In the black veil of man's forgetfulness
Since waning horror visited our land:

Beset by giant devils from the north
Who came in dragon-ships from o'er the sea
And burned and razed each clachan to the dust,
Slaying the last of our great hero-kings –

I dreamt of all the glories old men tell
And heard the minstrels tell of ancient days
When Ian, Brude and Oscar of the Dirk
Built up their mighty empire – now destroyed –
Which made our Celtic fame ring round the world.

But one day light at heart, I heard a song,
A slow, sad ballad of the East Sea's edge
Telling how, patiently, a hermit sat
In humble mountain cave far to the West
Awaiting who should come – as willed the Gods –
To beg his magic aid to make anew
The glory of the kingdom Angus ruled,
And ever in my head rang the refrain:

'Come to the West, where great Kenneth awaiteth thee,
Come to the westerly isles of the sea,
Over the moorland the seer'd desire
Fateth thee – on to the mountains of heather with me.'

Fired by the ballad's lilt, with goal I searched
In ancient screeds, yet treasured by our priests
And found a tale like to a minstrel's lay
Promising great reward to him who sought
The distant cavern of one Kenneth Begh,
An aged mighty seer, born in the days
When Sheamus Ian slew the Picts – and yet
Alive! – I tarried not, but seized my staff
And spear, and started on my pilgrimage.

Thus thought I as, my journey's end in sight,
I gazed upon the hills, beyond whose ridge
Lay the blue waters of the Western Sea; –
When suddenly I felt a presence near
And turning, saw a noble, upright man
Of comely countenance and raven beard,
A leathern bonnet on his head,
Stalking with heavy pace ten steps behind.
'Who art thou, friend, and whence has't come?' cried I,
Gripping my spear-shaft and the studded targe.
Advancing to my side, the stranger said:
'Continue not thy journey, foolish youth –
All is a dream, deceiving fantasy
Arising from thy restless, foolish brain.
The splendour of our race hath gone, hath gone,
And for no childish fretting may return.
Go back! Thou searchest for thy seer in vain.
There is no seer, enchantment, in the world
Can ere restore the mountain glory more!
This land is drear and waste and nevermore
Can be ought else but hideous wilderness;

And only I remain to wail the past,
The dauntless spirit of the Celtic race!'

And with those awesome words, the demon wraith
Vanished, as melt the wisps of mountain mists.
Yet ever in my ears there rang anew
The plaintive haunting ballad, which seemed now
To double its appeal and wistfulness.

Come to the West, where great Kenneth awaiteth thee.
Come to the westerly isles of the sea.

Then Cast I off the spirit's powerful spell
– augering nought but horror and despair –
And heeding but the lilting melody
Strove onwards o'er the moor through many hours,
At last with gladsome stride the uplands reached
And ran, such was my ardour, to the scarp: –
How changed and fair the whole surroundings were!
Under my brogues the rich blue heather bent,
I passed midst leafy trees and heard a stream
Go rustling midst the ferns upon the slope.
I reached the crest – the moon already up –
Bathed in the moonlight, by the western sea,
And all the mighty company of the isles
– Here on this further slope the Cavern lay!

Forgetful of my weary journey, I
Ran hard adown the hillside, and at last
Espied a hollow underneath a rock,
From which a gleaming light shone through the gloom –
With reverent steps the Cavern I approached
And whispered; 'Holy seer: thy wait is o'er!
The gods have willed a pilgrim youth to come
To beg the magic aid to make anew
The glory of the kingdom Angus ruled.'

I entered then the cave and knelt to wait
The longed for charmed answer of the seer.
But nought but silence reigned within the cave,
The lighted bracket flickered eerily,
Then saw I at the bleakest corner's edge
A fleshless skull and hideous skeleton,
And by its side a leathern bonnet lay.

Not surprisingly, when Hamish came to write his last poem, 'Under the Earth I Go', almost fifty years later, he reprises the values set out in this youthful 'pilgrim ballad'.

Change elegy into hymn, remake it –
Don't fail again. Like the potent
Sap in these branches, once bare, and now brimming
With routh of green leavery
Remake it, and renew.

Makar ye maun sing them –
Cantos of exploit and dream
Dain of desire and fulfilment
Ballants of fire and red flambeaux…

  Tomorrow, songs
Will flow free again, and new voices
Be borne on the carrying stream

Hamish's commitment to the values of Scots folk tradition is set out more intellectually in a letter he wrote to Jamie Cable, a fellow student at Cambridge, in 1939. They had quarrelled about Hamish's wish to listen to Cable's wireless:

… a word or two I would like to add about yourself and the 'gutter music' which you switched off. When I reflect that you are prepared to condone the flat and insipid vulgarities of Rupert Brooke, merely because he dangles on the end of a sagging 'civilized' literary tradition, it annoys me all the more that you can condemn the rombustuous

Rabelaisian vulgarities of an Irish street ballad, because it comes out of the 'gutter'. Villon came out of the 'gutter' – he was a boozer, a whoremaster, a thief and a murderer, but he was a great poet. Sean O'Casey's characters breed and brag over the 'gutter' but they are blood-brothers of Falstaff and Bardolph, of Pistol and Nym … Falstaff, with the 'cynicism that comes of a cold, cold feet.' says 'Honour is a mere scutcheon, and so ends my catechism'. The peddlar Seumas Shields, with the same cynicism mocks at the sufferers for Irish freedom, 'O Kathleen ni Hooligan, your way's a thorny way'. Will Kemp sang 'With hey ho, the wind and rain' as he danced with his drum to Norwich along the common roads. 'While going the road to sweet Athy', the Irish ballad-monger made his immortal song – which Auden included in the Oxford book he edited, as well as in his Poet's Tongue. Burns, who drank himself sick with his Jolly Beggars is one of the great poets of the world – greater than Villon because his range is wider. But the poetic works of Wilde are an object lesson in how not to write poetry, even though he was O so civilized.

The truth is that art and civilisation are not synonymous and it is farcical to protest they are. As Clive Bell points out the Congolese fetish-makers were artists, but they were not in the restricted and proper sense of the word, civilized. I have not the faintest wish to disparage those great artists who were civilized – Phidias, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Raphael, Racine, Milton, Wren, Jane Austen; but I want to take up my cromak in defence of those who were not:- the builders of the Gothic Cathedrals, Villon, Shakespeare, Rembrandt, Emily Bronte, Rousseau, Whitman, Turner, Wagner, as well as the authors of the Iliad, the Scottish Border ballads, the Mabinogian and the folk-songs of all countries – and last but not least the sculptors of the Congo, and Easter Island. Their glory I take pride in proclaiming.

And I continue to protest, unashamably, that in a Dublin tenement or a Hebridean 'black house' I find a richer and sweeter human spirit that in the town house of my aunt's friends, the Montroses. You told me a

while back that you are no poet, and I shrewdly suspect that one of the chief reasons is that you lack the wider humanity which would tell you that all art, from the Cockney, 'Knees-up Mother Brown', to W. Von der Vogelweiden's songs, and from Paul Robeson's Plantation songs to Goethe's Faust – is good and excellent because it is a manifestation of the human spirit. When art turns in on itself, when it exists for Art's sake, it is bad art, art gone rotten, and is hardly worth the name art at all. That is why I send Wilde skipping into ever-hunting Acteon with a stinging slap on his yielding buttocks.

If you were to write poetry now, you would write in a tradition moribund among its likes and languors, the last throes of romanticism in its dismal decline. Poetry can free itself at long last from the Georgian and neo-Tennysonian tradition, but only by going back to the realities of life – to the vigour of folk poetry and the class-struggle – for example – which realities conservatives are blind to. And the folk culture of America, White and Black, has also contributed to the healthy movement of modern literature. 'I hear America singing' wrote Walt Whitman, and from the voices of freed slaves in the Deep South; from the cowhands and hill-billies of Tennessee and the Mid-West, from the rain-storm-roaring-hobos who hitch-hike from Mexico to Maine, the song has come. (Burns-songs, just to remind you, are not book songs.) The folk culture of America lives – like that of the Celtic Countries, the most vital in the world.

… Like Lorca I declare war on the conservatives, political and literary, just as I hate all those who attack culture, or worship militarism, or think the 'poor', in the lump are bad! – and just as I despise those who find in great music stimulation and not satisfaction, or who confess, almost in so many words, that they are amongst the lowest of the low – music imagists! –

All this is the consequence of a rollicking Irish song! Yet it is all true, I think. My truth any way. I sign myself, as is fitting, in Gaelic – Seamus mac Eanrig.

In January 1952, fourteen years after that letter was written, Hamish was offered his first short-term contract as a folklore research assistant at the new School of Scottish Studies – and the Golden Age of Scottish Folk Collecting began. 1951 was the year of Alan Lomax, Jimmy MacBeath and Willie Matheson. 1952, the year of the Horseman's Word and John MacDonald the Singing Molecatcher. 1953, the year of the great Jeannie Robertson (the kind of seer and song-carrier he had imagined in his poem 'Fellow Traveller'). 1954, the year of the Stewarts of Blair, 1955, the year of 'The Tinker Project', 1956, a year of tours to Galloway, the Hebrides and Ireland. 1957, the year of Ailidh Dall and the Stewarts of Remarstaig. 1958, the year of the Edinburgh University Folk Club, 1959, the year in which the Scots Folk Revival began to make it big internationally with a plethora of folk singers and musicians under-pinning the upsurge of Popular Music. No wonder Hugh MacDiarmid lavished praise and fierce criticism on this extraordinary phenomenon of a man.

It is difficult to say when the Modern British Folk Revival began but whatever date is chosen – the name Hamish Henderson is likely to loom large. In 1938/39 he was singing ballads for W. H. Auden, Benjamin Britten, Dylan Thomas, Paul Potts and speaking for folk tradition within the Cambridge Union, and Socialist Society. He carried his zeal into the army in 1941, when he began seriously collecting (and writing) soldier's balladry. 'The Ballad of Section Three', 'King Faruk', 'The Highland Division's Farewell to Sicily' and 'The D Day Dodgers' are just three of his major contributions during WW II. In 1947 Hamish published his 'Ballads of World War II', in Glasgow. In 1948 he composed his immortal 'John MacLean March' and used magazines like 'Conflict' to forward his Marxist folk-political vision. During that year his 'Elegies for the Dead in Cyrenaica' were awarded the first Somerset Maugham Award for Poetry. In 1949 Hamish was in Ireland – working for the WEA in Ulster: there he worked to stimulate an Irish folk/literary revival – and founded the Irish Peace Movement. As ever his folk studies provided him with the platform from which he could address 'everything concerning people'.

In 1950 Hamish went to Italy to translate 'The Prison Letters of Antonio Gramsci', and found himself feted as a hero. In Milan, Bologna,

Venice, Rome, Hamish inspired many of the revolutionary poets, artists and film-makers then leading the post-war *Risorgimento.* He spoke about Hugh MacDiarmid, Sorley MacLean, and Gramsci. He also spoke against the nuclear arms race and the war in Korea and, in October 1950, found himself expelled by an unholy alliance of the CIA and the CD government. Financially and politically 1951 proved a hard year for Hamish but – he founded the Edinburgh People's Festival (which consequently blossomed into the Edinburgh Fringe) and, in 1952 he was offered a research job at the School of Scottish Studies.

There is no doubt that during the early post-war period Hamish had high communist/nationalist political ambitions but – the times they were against him: and, gradually, he realised it was not revolution but the folk process that would see his dreams realised. Hamish made himself part of a process that Lao-tse had understood almost two thousand years previously: '*How did the great rivers and / Seas gain dominion over / The thousand lesser streams? / By being lower than they*.' Like Brer Rabbit in his briar bush, Hamish got himself flung exactly where he wanted to be. After his letter of appointment (to the SSS) he wrote to a friend that he would be '*collecting ballads and finding singers, God's own job – and hospitality money provided … And sae at last this bonnie cat / He had a stroke o' luck!*' Five years earlier he had written to his friend Geordie Hamilton:

> *It is in the unsounded deeps of the great laments and in the ecstatic vortex of the dance that you will find the Scottish unity… and today is a morning of splendid winter sunshine. If you could only be here now you'd see a vision of Scotland, of the Sgurr of Eigg and dark green Arisaig of the birchwoods, that would take the sting out of pre-destined damnation…*

Hamish lived in a state of semi-permanent euphoria and many of those around him felt touched by what he enabled them to see, to do, to be. A letter from John A. S. MacDonald (written in the 1960s but referring to 1940s) suggests something of the transforming impact Hamish could have:

> *You were renewing wartime friendships* [Rev. Norman MacDonald and Norman Robertson] – *the food in the hotel* [Lochmaddy] *was superb, and there was an atmosphere of almost joyfulness about, which I, at least, never experienced before or after…*

Hamish was an unleasher of forces. He championed his informants and wanted their voices to be heard both within and outwith the SSS, on the BBC, and across the world. He also wanted the material piling up in the archives of the SSS used – as templates for a folk revival that would have far-reaching cultural and political consequences. The frustration of Hamish's wishes (and Calum Maclean's) in these areas stimulated questions at the School, at the BBC, and within the British Intelligence Services that remain unresolved.

The School, however, despite its problems, quickly established a remarkable international reputation and, for sixty years, it has been a uniquely homely meeting place for scholars, students, tradition bearers, creative artists and thinkers – and a wonderful resource for Scotland and the world. But from the beginning Hamish and Calum Maclean (the two pre-eminent collectors at the School) found themselves at odds with the Secretary/Archivist Stewart Sanderson. Disagreements centred on the importance of oral, as opposed to literary conservation; on copyright; about money, about the censoring of bawdy texts, about broadcasting policy. Naturally it was the secretary/archivist who had the power and pulled the purse-strings, it was he who had a secretary and a car. It was he who organised technical support and oversaw external policy-making. Neither Hamish nor Calum were technical wizards and both would have done more, and better, recordings if they had been given better technical assistance. Both men frequently travelled by bike or shanks pony and, after Calum lost an arm to cancer, this was not easy. Hamish's interest in developing a stronger film/TV/video collection was also minimally developed. No small institution can do everything but since the Golden Decade of the Fifties the School has, too often, fallen between stools – collection, preservation, archiving, research, teaching, creative making and broadcasting.

In addition, it seems clear that as the years passed Hamish would have benefited from sabbatical leave but, in over thirty years of full-time employment, he got not a term. Genius is rare and university administrators – like great patrons – should recognise and nurture particular talents in particular ways. That Hamish achieved much as a scholar and artist, that he recognised the genius lying dormant in the Scots folk tradition, should not blind us to the fact he could have done more with more encouragement and assistance. Hamish honoured Everyman but also knew that one thousand plasterers cannot achieve what Michelangelo achieved. He knew that life and art need to be addressed 'whole' and unified. For him the folk tradition was the bedrock. In 1952 he noted:

> *No one can interest me in 'fine' writing as such. Any fool poet can write well if he happens to have talent – but the poets who love have a much larger problem, not only to write well, but to express once again the whole world, and this impinges not on one individual but on the collective.*

Hamish saw the folk process as democracy in action, folk collecting as something for the collective but – the individual voice was crucially important and Hamish had no hesitation in acknowledging the special powers of the best of his informants. For example, Hamish found in Jeannie Robertson something more than information, songs, stories of international importance; he recognised her as an independent artist – a fellow artist of high degree – a woman of genius with whom he was proud to develop ideas and a conjoint-art. And, over the years, he was happy to collaborate with Jeannie – as she summoned-up and developed her repertoire. Such attitudes and actions raise questions that academic folklorists rarely address. For example, to what extent do all interviewers affect and nurture the performances their subjects give? Are informants 'untouchable' objects of scientific and ethnographic interest, or human beings interested in presenting themselves and their traditions in the best light? Are informants free to 'improve' their performances as most professional singers and TV presenters seek to do to improve theirs? When

does improvement become untenable? These questions raise questions about the Western intellectual tradition itself – high art and low art – etc.

Hamish was a folk scholar but also a troubadour – happy to light the blue touch-paper of renewal (the Folk Revival) and stand back. His recognition of the authentic and ancient was unrivalled – but life, renewal, these were the things. If this compromised his integrity in the eyes of certain folk scholars and authorities so be it.

With regard to the Revival performers themselves – Hamish's policy was to encourage the revival artists to acquaint themselves with the best and most authentic source-singers, story-tellers and musicians but then to trust them to do what they would. Life, love, art – not dead precept – were his beacons. Who, today, has Hamish's grasp of the big principles? Today, specialisms drive most university departments, and breadth of study is an increasingly marginalised concept, however, if you drive breadth of life from folklore you have nothing more than 'the leathern bonnet' Hamish described at the end of his 'Fellow Traveller' ballad.

For Hamish – as for the tinkers – the lifestyle was the culture, the culture was the lifestyle. He was a Rabelaisian man but, like Rabelais, also a font of timeless ideas and ideals. As with Socrates, as with Christ, as with most visionary thinkers, Hamish's ideas were implied rather than laid down hard, and, crucially, they depend on other people – to recognise and take them on. I will now outline just a few of the big ideas that Hamish sought to cultivate: all have that common humanity that the folk traditions so frequently distil.

1) **Hamish's lifelong stance against war** was impelled by folk imperatives of the kind every mother knows. In his poem 'Dark Streets to Go Through', Hamish articulated the idea that one of the prime legacies of war is more war. The poem was a response to a night spent in his aunt Mabel's top-floor flat at 42 Ashley Gardens, Kensington, in April 1941. The flat enjoyed fine views across Westminster Cathedral. Mabel had appointed herself an unofficial fire-bomb watcher and enjoyed directing the fire-fighters by telephone! Sitting together they witnessed one of the heaviest raids of the London Blitz. In the morning he wrote this poem, dedicated to 'Lotte', a little Jewish girl whom he had helped across

Germany in 1939. Watching London burning he thinks of her, hoping, that somewhere, out there, in a Europe aflame, she is alive – and will live on to see such madness ended.

> … Dark streets to go through, in nights debauched of quiet
> Dark Streets blazing like an *auto de fe*, till cease
> Well after dawn the bombers' roar and riot.
> And the city, in daylight's drawn and haggard relief
> Shifts on its side to sleep for half an hour.
> And then goes to work, not bothering to count the dead.
> Dopes, morons, mortal cousins, fools, heroes, of heroes flower –
> From my heart I say it, not minding what others said.
>
> Yet this 'terrible beauty' must not blind us;
> men who have lost the power
> To think without anger are not a pretty sight.
> Planes tilting over the quaking black ant-heap of houses
> Will have much to answer for
> (much surely to answer for)
> Besides hell through a long-drawn April night.
> Making our task less easy.
>
> Still, a task we must carry through.
> In spite of murderous men.
> In the fable
> God is murdered but born again too…

The poem is a noble tribute to the people of London. It carries echoes of the beauties Wordsworth had seen from Westminster Bridge and it ends with a classic folk motif of redemptive continuance but, above all, the poem looks modern warfare in the face. The 'terrible beauty' Hamish sees, links the present war to past calamities and he recognises that Europe is facing a crucial moment in its history, not unlike that which Ireland faced in 1916. When he writes '*Making our task less easy*', he raises a profound question. The battle now joined will be long, hard and bloody and, after victory, Hamish foresees that the consequences will

corrupt mankind for centuries to come. He knew that the Reformation (in Scotland) was once, exactly, the same kind of all-consuming issue now confronting twentieth century Europe: the Reformation had triumphed and brought great benefits and glory to Scotland but it had, also, planted poisons and pernicious constraints that still circulate in the body-politic and psychology of the nation, four hundred years later. He foresees that the great campaign against Nazi tyranny, even if it ends in total victory, is likely to leave Britain doused with similar long-lasting poisons. In this visionary poem, in praise of London's will to resist, he foresees that the heroism born in these streets will, in the years to come, make the work of the peacemakers more difficult because the satisfactions and moral self-righteousness of the victors will hook them on the 'necessity' of future wars – to be fought for 'the democratic good' imposed by technologically superior force. He recognised that the generation sickened by the bombing of Guernica was now accepting the mass of bombing of whole nations and that the idea of the destruction of mankind itself would soon be regarded, by apparently sensible leaders, as just another military option.

2) **Hamish believed that the Poet and the People must have their say in War Policy.** He had personal experience of modern warfare and he determinedly used his experience to tackle the brutalities of war head-on. His thinking came to a head in Sicily in July 1943. Having left the African desert he determined to start planning a post-war renaissance – a new Italy, a new Europe, a revived and independent Scotland. And, as soon as Sicily was won, Hamish began orchestrating his thinking in a historic series of 'debriefing' lectures – given to the victorious battalions of the 51st Highland Division. Hamish was the division's Intelligence Officer and bard, and he knew exactly what he was talking about: he had helped draw up the orders of battle, watched the conflict unfold, interrogated hundreds of enemy prisoners, witnessed terrible slaughter. He spoke the languages of the combatants and the civilian population. He knew the history of Mediterranean civilisation and had a clear understanding of the international struggle their battles were part of. He presented each of the Highland battalions with a detailed account of the specific actions in

which they had been engaged and, whilst the reek of battle was still in their nostrils, Hamish did something seminal in the history of modern warfare. He sang them; out of blood-shed into new being. It was the oral tradition given contemporary focus, here was a modern panegyric delivered with civilising authority. Like a tribal bard. Hamish reviewed bloody facts, spoke of home, spoke sacred names. He gave honour to men who had survived five weeks of savage fighting: he helped them digest grotesque experience and go forward, fortified and cleansed. It was folklore in action. It was post-traumatic stress disorder – forestalled. The man who, in Cairo, had sung King Faruk to shame, now spoke of Scotland's pride in them – the battalions of the 51st Highland Division: he told them of the debt they owed the dead, and of their duties in going home: and they cheered him to the echo. In his fifth Elegy he writes:

> Strong-winged
> our homing memory held us
> on unerring course…
>   Aye, in spite of
> the houses lying cold, and the hatred that engendered
> the vileness that you know, we'll keep our assignation
> with the Grecian Gael (and those others). Then foregather
> in a gorge of the cloudy Jebel
> older than Agamemnon…

These words conjure Highland Scotland, Ancient Greece and the cloudy mountains of North Africa. Hamish's Turneresque image of '*a gorge of the cloudy Jebel* / '*Older than Agamemnon*', summons Horace's immortal ode to the unsung to mind. Two thousand years earlier, Horace had written '*Many brave men lived before Agamemnon's time; but they are all un-mourned and unknown, covered by the long night, because they lacked their sacred poet*'. In Hamish (still only twenty-three-years-old) the men of the 51st Highland Division had found 'their sacred poet' and they understood that his words would sing them: that they, their dead, their deeds would live whilst Scotland stands.

There were our own, there were the others.
Therefore, minding the great word of Glencoe's
son, that we should not disfigure ourselves
with villainy of hatred; and seeing that all
have gone down like curs into anonymous silence,
I will bear witness for I knew the others.
Seeing that littoral and interior are alike indifferent
and the birds are drawn again to our welcoming north
why should I not sing, *them*, the dead, the innocent?

3) Hamish's plan for a Second Italian Risorgimento was an amazing 'folk concept' that would play its part in the pan-European Renewal that followed it. Relaxing above the Straits of Messina in late August 1943, Hamish noted: '*Popular solidarity is the price of popular victory*' and addressing the failure of the socialist revolutionaries of 1848 he set down his 'collective' but highly personal folk-thoughts.

Above all they did not learn that in a revolution, only those who have the élan which drives to innovation can hope, if they are of the left, to succeed; for it is in innovation that the masses find courage and proof that they have the capacity to govern. Delay to experiment, in a revolutionary time, is always the bulwark of reaction; for when men are not pressed to hope they are driven to fear. The power of property has always been in its ability to re-establish its claims by postponing the hopes which threaten its dominion … Kingsley Martin's writing confirms my own duty and makes it sharp for me. Defeat of Fascism does not stop short at the defeat of the Italian and German armies. It will mean an intensified campaign when I return to the shores of Britain…

Or must it always
seem premature, the moment always at hand,
and never arriving, to use
our rebellious anger for breaking
the vicious fetters that bind us.

> Endure, endure. There is as yet no solution
> and no short cut, no escape and remedy
> but our human iron.
> And this Egypt teaches us
> that mankind, put to the torment, can bear
> on their breast the stone tomb of immolation
> for millennia. The wind. We can build our cairn. (Fourth Elegy)

4) Racism, religious bigotry and Western imperialism were all forces Hamish believed reducible by the folk imperative. In 1947 he campaigned against the visit of George VI to South Africa, writing; '*there is no place on earth where black people are worse treated*'. In 1949 he presented Paul Robeson on public stages in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Belfast:

> *When I was last in Scotland, my visit coincided with that of Paul Robeson. I met him speaking to the Edinburgh students about the artist and the citizen. One is never justified in trying to draw a line between one and the other – but there are times when the role of the writer (or artist) must be subordinated to that of the citizen … My task in introducing Paul Robeson to Belfast is to commend the way in which he is exploiting his magnificent voice to the full – for the good of the citizens of this city and working people of the world…*

Hamish also met Robeson in Glasgow and, using the pseudonym Brenda Sharpe, described his performance at a concert there in these inspiring words:

> *For well over an hour he treated us to what was neither just a political speech, aesthetic or cultural analysis, nor a song recital, but fused all these into one spontaneous and indissolvable creative expression, using song as his theme. His message of the essential brotherhood of man was hammered home by the common lilts and harmonies of folksongs from all the peoples of the earth. Thus Robeson affirmed his great conviction that all great art belongs to the people, is born of the people, and addressed to the people … His hearers became profoundly aware of*

the justice and strength of his cause, which is nothing less than the cause of humanity. He stood there as the representative and champion of countless millions of ordinary people, speaking with their voice and embodying their strength, so that as he spoke, the forces of prejudice, seemed dwarfed to pigmy significance. We were infected and inspired by his own tremendous faith that the cause of the people, the cause of right and justice, is the cause which shall inevitably triumph in the end…

In 1964 Hamish wrote the world's first song in honour of Nelson Mandela, 'Rivonia'. In 1970, he noted: '*The Colour Question? The biggest threat to the world*.' In 1994 Hamish sang, hand in hand with Mandela, above George Square in Glasgow. Fifty thousand people joined in, with them. It was a moment of universal folk solidarity: music, story, universal brotherhood – one in joy – but also a consequence of intellect, courage and political commitment by a folklorist with attitude.

5) 'The Role of the Artist in Society' was an issue to which Hamish gave much serious thought. Lectures he gave, as Secretary of the WEA in Ulster in 1948/49, suggest the originality and breadth of his approach:

Art depends on the society. In primitive societies the poet or bard was an honoured person. Integrally part of the community. His songs or hymns were a part of reality for the people. The poet's 'illusion' of the harvest field was part of the reality… But in this anxious, despondent, febrile period of late capitalism, artists have become more and more isolated, more and more shut in on themselves. Artists have tended to become very arrogant, capricious and pretentious. Poets, of course, realize this – realize what has been lost. The Scot MacDiarmid, and the Irishman Yeats have expressed it with poignancy … But others have retreated into 'contempt', into what would seem to be a contempt for life … What is the alternative?

Artists must try to reach completeness again – though, in our age, they are unlikely to achieve it. How should the attempt be made? By a

> *patient road of study, sacrifice and understanding, by a refusal to be rattled, refusal to accept the values of external mediocrities, the clique of letters. And by a growth of understanding of the duties and problems that face us. Artists must address the age in which they are living and show an increasing awareness of their social duties.*
>
> *This is a time when the artist must try to write for the whole people, not just a section. He must give (express) the social struggle of his time – and (in the wake of Imperialism) the struggles of national communities for cultural and political freedom – their poetic and aesthetic justification. That does not mean they should not write about love – but they should show love as it really affects human beings, united together in society, and not in the barren heraldic manner of Phedre… In all countries, but especially in countries like Ireland and Scotland, we must take the trouble to find out that throughout the period when artists were estranged from the people – there was folk-art, the art of the people – a continuing 'unified sensibility'. People are only now beginning to realize that much folk poetry is actually superior to the art poetry of such periods.*
>
> *The real study of folk art – the art of the labouring classes, the work songs of the community – how they come about, how they grow, what their energy and aesthetic force consist of – is still in its infancy; – for the very good reason that it has not suited the powers that be to further such studies. Folk art is an implicit – and in many aspects an explicit challenge to the ruling class way of looking at the world. There is a philistinism in the working class and in their organisations but these things can be taken in their stride … The poet and the community must be threaded together again – and we must start here, where we stand – we can do no other.*

Hamish believed there was a Marxist lock, into which his 'folk-spirit key' could be inserted to affect communities everywhere.

6) Hamish recognised that Folk Art – like all significant art – functions at levels beyond reason. One of Hamish's early source-singers and storytellers was a young Morayshire Traveller, Geordie Stewart. In 1954 he gave Hamish a superb rendition of international folk tale, 'The Green Man of Knowledge', published as a key text in the first issue of the journal *Scottish Studies*, in 1957. Thirty years later Geordie gave Hamish another story that shows how, sometimes, Hamish's big ideas found their best expression in the mouths of his folk informants.

> ***Tricking the Laird:*** *Old tinker couple. Poor. On the estate of a mean and vindictive laird. Old woman, one day, puts here sales earnings in the donkey bag – for safety. The old man feeds the donkey. The donkey eats the money! A problem. Old man watches, catches, sifts the shit: – watched by the laird. The laird wants the donkey! Finally offers five pound and a year's rent. Agreed. Laird gets nothing. Reneges on his promise. Demands rent! Old tinker gets a bag of blood – in a cow's intestine – from butcher. Ties it to his wife's chest. Laird visits and asks for money … Old tinker asks his wife to bend backwards. Takes up a knife – and cuts her throat. The blood gushes and she falls to the ground. The Laird is surprised. The old tinker says, 'I don't know what I've done – but don't worry!' And he takes down an old brass horn from the wall, lifts his wife's skirt and blows, 'Dedididid …' And she rose and went ben the hoose, washed herself doon – and threw away the intestine. 'Does it really work?' said the laird. And back she came!*
>
> *'Well,' says the laird, 'I want that horn very much. I tell you what, I'll sign the cottage over to you – for life – if you give me the horn.' So, a deal was struck. The laird said: 'I must get hame wi' this!' Says the old wife: 'O, now I've done it. I dread to hear the consequences…'*
>
> *The laird was having a lovely evening meal. The Justice of the Peace and the auld minister were there, and all the important people of the town. Suddenly, the laird stops the party and says: 'Im going to show you something! You wont believe it!' 'Ah,' they say, 'What's he up to now?' He was very eccentric ye ken. He says to his wife: 'Bend backwards –*

bend backwards – not ben!', and he lifts up the carving knife. Cuts her throat! She's lying there. They all look at him. 'AaH!' Like that! 'No problems. Don't worry!' he says, and he lifts up the horns: 'Dedididid… Dedididid…!' She doesnae move! He was locked up for life. He was locked up for life! Well, there you are – that's an old tinker story.

Geordie told Hamish this tale, at the time that the Lindow Man was being dug up in Cheshire. Hamish made contact with the archaeologists involved; one wrote back.

Dear Mr Henderson – Thank you for your article on the Green Man of Knowledge … I am currently digging at Lindow Moss … I am really a beginner when it comes to oral tradition … What impresses me most about your tale is how it shows a core of ideas found – not only in Scotland – but in Welsh, Irish, English, Romany archaeology. The phenomenon of the bog-burial occurs in broadly the same period of Prehistory across Northern Europe amongst tribes of different cultures and often at odds with each other. Perhaps rituals and stories are easier to transmit across cultural boundaries than objects, house-types, and even languages … The argument you put forward is similar to the one which seems to rage constantly in archaeology – between the importance of the migration of people or the independent development of cultural traits. The more I find out about the British oral tradition, the greater value it seems to have for archaeologists concerned with pre-medieval sites and cultures in this country…

What Hamish's folklore did for archaeology, it also did for a number of criminal police enquiries, for theatrical performances, films, television programmes, political campaigns and much more.

After being shown round Charles Rennie Mackintosh's reconstructed flat, in the Hunterian Museum, Glasgow, Hamish's friend John Berger remarked, in 1982: '*This is a man who by himself created a civilisation*'. Something similar might be said of Hamish. But where Mackintosh's vision of civilisation was self-contained and perfect, Hamish's vision was always of the lived moment – with us and ever before us. Like a potter,

working with the clay rising in his hands, Hamish saw folklore as an ever-changing feast. He loved the sensory realities of life and he particularly honoured artists in whom transparent love is the prime energising force – as in Dante, William Blake, Vincent van Gogh. In old age, he scrolled out his own adaptation of Corinthians XIII:

> *The three words. Love: love is the only God that I believe in. The books of the Holy Bible say but one time just exactly what love is, and in those three little words it pours out a hundred million college educations, and says, God is love. And that is the only definitive answer to the ten thousand wild queries and questions that I my own self tossed at my bible – that is the only real sensible easy honest warm plain quick and clear answer I found – when I was too ready to throw so-called cowardly thieving poisonous religion out of my back door. It was those three words that made not only religion but also several other sorts of superstitious fears and hatreds in me meet a very quick death. God is love. God is really love. Love castes out hate. Love gets rid of all fears. Love washes all clean. Love forgets all debts. Love forgets all mistakes. Love overcomes all errors, and excuses and pardons and understands the reason why the mistake, the error, the stumble was made. Love heals all. Love operates faster and surer than time or space or both. Love does not command you, order you, dictate to you. Love asks rather for you to tell its forces what to do, and where to go, and how to build up your planet here by the blueprint plan of your heart's desire. Love can't operate on your behalf as long as your own sickly fear will not permit love to act on your behalf. Your love commands must ever be just exactly the direct opposite of war's crazy baseless hatreds, peace, peace, and sweet peace must be the song on your tongue tip. – Peace is love. Love is peace. – Your love command must for all eternity be your peace command.*

One reason why Hamish's reputation as a folklorist is frequently qualified is that he is difficult to categorise. His insights light lamps far beyond the narrow field of folklore but for this he deserves praise not criticism. The Scottish composer and musical historian John Purser is someone

who has responded appropriately. As an eighteen-year-old student Purser was inspired by Hamish's folk-thinking. Thirty years later when his book *Scotland's Music* was published, in 1992, Purser wrote:

> *Dear Hamish … I remember being impressed by your insistence that the tradition was a living one. The impression never left me, though I was confused by it at the time because my knowledge was through print not lips. Now I know better and can put that down to a distant memory of your own vivid enthusiasm as well as to the wonderful burgeoning of music and song you and others have done to bring to the fore … The best reward will, of course, be when younger generations take up the work – which they show every sign of doing.*

The outstanding American ballad scholar, Bud Bronson, was even more enthusiastic in his endorsement of Hamish's work, writing, in the early 1970s:

> *Dear Hamish, 'The Muckle Sangs' reached me a fortnight ago. What a splendid album! And what an enduring treasure. My cup runneth over. I rejoice to possess it, and have read every word of your jacket summary and the handsome booklet. You have put it all in proper perspective … it is wonderfully satisfying that living tradition continues to unlock its secret repositories to the deserving seekers. And it was your divining-rod, Hamish, that beyond all others in these latter days, found the springs of native song and brought them again to the surface for the refreshment of our generation and generations to come. It must be enormously gratifying, and exhilarating, to you to realize how fructifying your discoveries and your influence has been. You touched the rock and living waters gushed forth. Posterity's debt to you is incalculable and will not be forgotten.*

Hamish was, in a real sense, here before us, and his vision will remain long after we have gone. It would not hurt us to be a little more generous towards him. Hamish, himself, was always generous to his finger-tips – as his eulogy for Calum Maclean makes clear.

> *Calum stood in the midst of a tradition, he was part-bearer as well as a collector (in the great Scottish tradition) and conscious of those who had gone before –John Francis Campbell of Islay, Hector MacLean, Alexander Carmichael, Ewan MacLachlan, John Lorne Campbell – yet in the end he can be seen to have excelled them all. His research papers were not numerous: he addressed the urgency of the task before him at a particular moment. He got down and announced, to the world, that which others must analyse and now take up.*

In February 1949 the historian E. P. Thompson honoured Hamish, as poet, with similar insight and precision:

> *I greet you with humility compagno, for you are that rare man, a poet. You have achieved poems out of our dead century… you must remain in a poet. Remember who you are writing for: the people of Glasgow, Halifax, Dublin … You more than any poet I know, are an instrument through which thousands of others can become articulate. And you must not forget that your songs and ballads … are quite as important as the Elegies.*

As ever, it is the folk aspect of Hamish's work that comes to the fore, marking it as original and important. And, the Pandora's box Hamish opened shows few signs of closing. In 1999, at the re-opening of the Scottish Parliament, it was Sheena Wellington who stole the show with a spine-tingling rendition of 'A Man's a Man for a' That'. In 2010 the prestigious Turner Prize was won by a Scottish sound-artist, Susan Phillipz – singing a ballad, 'The Lowlands Low'. Did these things have anything to do with Hamish and the folk? You bet.

Shetland and the School of Scottish Studies

Cathlin Macaulay

Cathlin Macaulay has family connections with Great Bernera in Lewis, and is an expert on oral and written folklore collections in Scotland. She is Curator of the School of Scottish Studies Archives, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, and Editor of Tocher*, the regular journal produced by the School of Scottish Studies Archives.*

The School of Scottish Studies was established in 1951 at the University of Edinburgh to collect, research, preserve and publish material relating to Scottish folklore, cultural life and the traditional arts. 2011, as well as being the 60th anniversary of the School, marked the Year of Scottish Islands. Much of the material in the Archives was collected in the Northern and Western islands of Scotland – at the time that the School was established there was a concern to gather in material that was on the verge of disappearing and the islands were seen to have the last vestiges of dialects, songs, tales and traditions that were no longer extant in most mainland communities. Over the past sixty years, with the many changes in economic conditions and cultural life, it is to be supposed that much of the oral tradition held in the Archives is no longer transmitted in the communities in which it was recorded.

There are around 700 recordings with contributions from Shetland. From Fair Isle to Unst, Papa Stour to Out Skerries and in between, the recordings contain a variety of material – music, songs, stories, customs, beliefs, riddles, rhymes, verse, place-names, oral history and descriptions of life in Shetland communities. Whilst collecting was not systematic, dependent, rather, on the interests of the particular fieldworker, most areas of ethnological and folkloric interest were covered and supplement the written and oral records created and held in Shetland. A certain amount has been published. Sound recordings feature on a number of the CDs on the Scottish

Tradition series, in particular fiddle music, wedding customs, children's lore and tales[1]. Transcriptions have regularly appeared in *Tocher*, the Archives journal, and Shetland tales feature in *Scottish Traditional Tales* and *The Green Man of Knowledge*[2]. There are various articles in the journal *Scottish Studies* and, apart from archivist Alan Bruford who was especially interested in the Northern Isles, as was one-time Director, Alexander Fenton, Shetland has been of particular interest to ethnomusicologists Peter Cooke and Katherine Campbell who have undertaken extensive work on fiddle music[3]. Access to material has greatly increased with the creation of a website with a selection of material from the Archives, the result of a collaborative project enabling digitisation and on-line access to material in the Sound Archive. There are now over 1800 items from Shetland on the Kist o Riches website which can be accessed from anywhere in the world (www.kistoriches.co.uk).

Given the vast amount of material from Shetland, this paper will present only a taster. This aims to reflect life in Shetland as well as enabling comparison with aspects of life and oral tradition on other Scottish islands. The transcriptions that follow were made by a variety of individuals over the years and have been left as they were rather than attempting standardisation. Transcription is an indefinite art and there will be differences, largely depending on the individual transcriber and their knowledge of Shetland. Where audio material is in the public domain, via *Kist o Riches*, this has been referenced.

Shetland is not especially renowned for its song tradition (unlike the Gaelic speaking islands), however there is a repertoire which incorporates

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1 *Shetland Fiddle Music* Scottish Tradition Series No 4 CDTRAX 9004, 1994.
The Fiddler And His Art Scottish Tradition Series No 9 CDTRAX9009, 1993.
Chokit On A Tattie Scottish Tradition Series No 22 CDTRAX9022, 2006.
Wooed And Married And Aa Scottish Tradition Series No 23 CDTRAX9023, 2008.
2 *Shetland Traditional Tales*, D A MacDonald and A J Bruford (eds), Polygon 1994.
The Green Man of Knowledge and other Scots traditional tales, Alan Bruford (ed), Aberdeen University Press, 1982.
3 See *The Fiddle Tradition of the Shetland Isles*, Peter Cooke, Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology, Cambridge, 1986; *The Fiddle in Scottish Culture: Aspects of the Tradition*, Katherine Campbell, Birlinn 2007.

both indigenous compositions and those gathered from elsewhere. A song with a special place in Shetland is the ballad *King Orfeo* (Child Ballad 19) with its Norn-influenced refrain. This linguistic legacy reflects the strong connections between Shetland and Scandinavia. Shetland was only ceded to Scotland in 1472, having been under Norse control since the Viking invasions of the 8th and 9th centuries. The ballad concerns King Orfeo's journey to fairyland to search for his wife. He succeeds in rescuing her by playing so well that he is offered anything he wants as a reward. The ballad is well known and originates from medieval times. Whilst the text has been documented in Shetland, the tune was considered lost until it was unearthed by Pat Shuldham Shaw when talking to well-known fiddler John Stickle of Unst in the late 1940s[4]. Stickle gave only a few stanzas. A longer version by Kitty Anderson of Lerwick was recorded by Francis Collinson in 1953 and also in 1955:

King Orfeo

Der lived a king inta da æst
Scowen örla grön
Der lived a lady in da wast
Whaar jorten han grön oarli

Dis king he has a-huntin geen
An left his Lady Isabel alane.

'Oh, I wiss ye'd never geen away
For at your hame is döl an wae

For da King o Faerie wi his dairt
Has pierced your lady ta da hert.'

An efter dem da king has geen
But when he cam hit was a grey stane.

4 See Pat Shuldham Shaw, 'Folk Music and Dance in Shetland', *Journal of the English Folk Song and Dance Society, 5*), Pat Shuldham Shaw, 'The Ballad 'King Orfeo'*, Scottish Studies* 19.

Dan he took oot his pipes ta play
But sair his hert wi döl an wae.

An first he played da notes o noy,
An dan he played da notes o joy.

Noo he's geen in inta der haa,
An he's geen in among dem aa.

Dan he took oot his pipes ta play
But sair his hert wi döl an wae.

'Noo tell tae us what you will hae
What sall we gie you for your play?'

'What I will hae I will you tell
An dat's my Lady Isabel.'

'Ye's tak your lady an ye's geeng hame
An ye's be king ower aa your ain.'

He's taen his lady and he's geen hame
An noo he's king ower aa his ain.[5]

Mention of the fairy realm brings us to the trows. The word is reckoned to come from the Scandinavian 'troll' but in terms of behaviour trows are in many ways more similar in size and appearance to the fairies, or Gaelic *sìthean* who dwell in the Western Isles. Like the *sìthean*, they are particularly associated with knowes or knolls (in Shetland they are sometimes called the hill folk)[6]. They have a capacity for good or ill in their relationships with humans and the theme of human-fairy encounters is as strong in

5 Kitty Anderson, Shetland recorded by Francis Collinson, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1955.145.B4–6. Transcription by Francis Collinson and Doreen Waugh. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/47965/7 (March 2012).
6 See Alan Bruford 'Trolls, Hillfolk, Finns, and Picts: the Identity of the Good Neighbours in Orkney and Shetland' in Peter Narváez (ed) *The Good People: New fairylore essays*, pp 116–141, Garland: New York 1991.

Shetland as in the Western Isles – (unintended) visits to fairyland were not uncommon:

> *There were two brothers and they were comin home from the piltocks one night. It was in the autumn and they were walkin along the lane to the house and the wan was in front o the ither like, wi da rod, and the other fellow was carryin the fish when the one in front missed the brother and he didna think anything on it. He went right on t' the house and of course the other brother never turned up and eventually they went and looked for 'm and they couldn't find him nowhere, never saw no trace of him. And they couldna understand what was become of him. And time went by – a whole year passed and then at the year's end he walked into the house carrying his sillocks on his back in a kishie. And they were still fresh – same as they were. And they wondered – they all of course got upset – they didn't know what – they thought it was a ghost. But anyhow he asked them what was the matter. And they told him, did he know he had been away a year? 'Oh', he said, that was nonsense he hid only been away a few minutes cause he said he just waitet a few minutes behind because, he said, he was passing along and he heard a fiddle playing, some music. And he turned around and looked, he said, he saw a door open. And he went to the door and looked in and he saw inside a lot of people dancin so he wondered what it was. He was a bit of a musician himself so he went inside to hear what was going on. And, of course, he stood what he thought was only a minute or two and then one of the people inside, the man inside, spoke to him and wanted him to come in farther. And he said, 'no', he hadn't time, he had to go home. So the man clapped him on the shoulder or on the back somewhere and he went home. And that's the time that he'd been, a year. But after he'd got home this place where the man clapped him on the back turned sore and ill, and anyhow eventually it was the cause of his death. He never got over it.*[7]

7 John Robertson recorded by Calum Maclean, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1954.111.1. Transcription by Cathlin Macaulay. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/30945/1 (March 2012).

The fairy world has a different time-scale to the human world. As well as losing time, in this instance, the man loses his health, perhaps because he refused the request to enter further into the fairy realm. Trowies and fairies are tricky to deal with and a refusal to comply with their wishes often leads to some form of retribution. However, the fairies are also associated with the giving of gifts such as that of healing ointment in the story of *Farquhar's Pige*. Trows and music are closely associated and in Shetland the fairies are the source of many fiddle tunes including *Hyaltadance, Winyadepla, Vallafield* and *Aith Rant* of which there are many versions in the Sound Archive with the stories of their origins[8].

Changeling stories, where a baby is taken by the fairies who substitute one of their own, are not as common as in the Western Isles but this anecdote by Andrew Hunter indicates how to deal with a trowie baby:

> *The way 'at the real baby was brocht back again – the wuman – she took a, well we should say a kishie wi so much earth or something in 'm and she scattered them aal on the floor, you see? She took da trowie baby and she put 'm on the floor and she sweepit 'm along wi dis what we would call möld* [earth, which would have been on the earthen floor] – *well she sweepit 'm along wi this and she sweepit 'm out the door … and then she got … her real baby would come back again.*
> *Alan Bruford: In the cradle?*
> *AH: Yes.*[9]

The trows and the seals are related according to Brucie Henderson who says that both are fallen angels who sided with the Devil and were kicked out of Heaven – 'the ones 'at fell on the ground was supposed to be the

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8 See 'The Fiddler and the Trows', *The Fiddle in Scottish Culture: Aspects of the Tradition*, Katherine Campbell, Birlinn 2007 and 'When the Trows Danced', *The Shetland Folk Book* Vol 2, p17, ed ES Reid Tait, Lerwick, 1951. Audio versions of fiddle tunes from the School of Scottish Studies Archives are available on http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk.
9 Andrew Hunter recorded by Alan Bruford, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1974.203.A1. Transcription by Cathlin Macaulay. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/77020/11 (March 2012).

Andrew Hunter, Nesting (Alan Bruford, 1974)

trows or fairies, and the ones 'at fell into the sea was supposed to be the seals. And that's the way when you see a seal sweemin wi a fine day, if you just look carelessly at 'm, 'at you would think it was a man…'[10] There are several versions of the archetypal story about the seal who becomes a man's wife, he hides her sealskin and she eventually finds it – often in a corn stook or the byre – and returns to the sea. An interesting variant, told by Catherine Mary Anderson of Fetlar (1886–1981), involves a seal rescuing a man, who has been stormbound after a seal hunting expedition, in return for his son's skin. The event is said to have taken place on Sule Skerry or the Skerries[11].

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10 Brucie Henderson recorded by Calum Maclean, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1955.97.2. http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/33150/1 (March 2012).

11 Catherine Mary Anderson recorded by Alan Bruford, SA1974.244.B7; reprinted in *Scottish Traditional Tales,* A J Bruford and D A MacDonald, Polygon 1994, p368.

Another supernatural creature who has associations with water is the nyugle. This horse-like creature is similar to the *each uisge* or water kelpie but does not seem to take on human form. It is associated with water mills and Brucie Henderson, of Arisdale, South Yell told of one encounter with the creature:

> *This nyugle in Shetland was a thing that they feared very, very much. Maybe aboot two hundred year ago, and it was aboot the time that they were quernin all their grain, the corn and the bere and all. And dey had at that time mills, and dat mills was near burns and dey were lochs at the tops o the hills and they took dat lochs and they had to go and open it* [like opening a sluice gate]*, and dey were a man frae Newfield in East Yell at took a bag o corn on his back and he went to this mill wi the bag o corn and set it doon in ita the mill and the place where the mill was built is the Queyon Tiptins* [?] *an its oot by East Yell atween that and Mid-Yell. And then he had to go wey up t' the top o the hill until a park 'at's called Peter Broon's Park. And dey were a loch dammed in there and he opened him and he gaed doon t' the mill and he was supposed to grind this seck o corn an he never returned. An dis wife had two children and they were lyin in ita their bed in Newfield and the boy was supposed to be five years old and he waakened and he said 'Mammy, da's dead oot, da's dead oot'.*
>
> *An she says 'Wheesht boy;' she says, 'dey're nothing o the kind.'*
>
> *But the moarning came and dey were no father at came and den dey made a search and den the mill was overthrown and dey took his body oot 'n under the underhoose o the mill and it was supposed to be the nyugle that was upset the mill and him yondroo ida the heart o the hills himsel and his body was taen and it was buried close be the mill in the Queyon Tiptins and you can see the marks yet o the heid o the heidstone an the footstone yet an that'll be aboot two hundert year ago and that's all I know.*
>
> *Calum Maclean: Yes. You would have heard old men tell that too… Now had they any idea, a description of the nyugle? What was it, was it an animal like a horse?*
>
> *Brucie Henderson: That's what they said it was like, a horse.*

Calum Maclean: And did it go in water, did it stay in water?
BH: Yes, they said so, yes.
CM: And did it frequent mills too?
BH: Yes it was mills that it always tormented … so in dat time it was always two that went to the mill for fear that the nyugle came and dey were wan always on watch and he was supposed to come in through the trap on the mill and overthrow the miller.
CM: I see.[12]

While crofting is a mainstay Shetlanders have been described as fishermen-crofters rather than crofter-fishermen. Fishing has long been a primary occupation undertaken both for subsistence and commercially, the latter controlled in previous years by the landlord who took a disproportionate share of the catch. As in the Western Isles, lairds and their henchmen were not generally popular. There is much historical tradition concerning the trickery and double dealing of lairds from the Scottish mainland who took land from those who had farmed for generations and, according to Udal law, already had possession. Clearances and evictions were a feature of the 19th century and are remembered down the generations to the present day.

Many different types of fishing took place. Around Shetland itself, haaf or deep sea fishing with long lines was the main source of income in the 18th and 19th centuries. Men, based at shore stations on the islands and the coast, would be out during the summer, usually twice a week, from mid May to mid August. On the sixerns there would be six men to a boat and once they were out to the deep sea the lines would be fed out by half the crew and the other half would keep to the oars. Cod, ling, tusk and saithe were the main fish sought. There are many descriptions of fishing on open boats including descriptions of boat parts and equipment, the various waters and the taboos associated with fishing, such as turning

12 Brucie Henderson recorded by Calum Maclean, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1954.113.4. Transcription by Cathlin Macaulay. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/31176/3 (March, 2012).

Corn screws, Foula (A Fenton, 1958)

sunwise, and those involving names and naming of familiar people and creatures. Many of the names for boat parts use Norn elements, and the Norn song, *The Unst Boat Song*, reflects this.[13]

As in the Western Isles, the indigenous herring industry developed as the white fishing declined. Whaling was also a source of employment, particularly during the 19th century and apart from serious descriptions of life aboard ship and catching and dealing with whales[14], we have a few tales that are associated with trips to Greenland. Tom Tulloch of Yell was the master of some very tall stories as well as many other supernatural legends

13 A version by Kitty Anderson is available at http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/47851/2 (March 2012). The archetypal version by John Stickle (also held in the School of Scottish Studies Archives) is transcribed and translated in *The Shetland Folk Book* Vol 2, p60, ed. ES Reid Tait, Lerwick, 1951.
14 See *Tocher* 22.

and historical tradition[15]. Conditions in the Arctic were tough as Rabbie Ramsay found out:

> *The Rabbie Ramsa' 'at stoppit up the rodd here 'at telled so many tall stories, 'at he wis, accordin to him – whither he was there or not I dinna keen – but he wis also at the Greenlant sealin an whalin, and this parteeclar day he was been a fairly long trek ower the ice, an he lighted in wi a polar bear. An he fired wan shot at him, but that seem't to hae very little effect. An he came to lodd his gun fir a second shot: he discovered that he hed plenty o pooder, but he hed no dredge* [of shot]. *An he cam oot in a sweat, an hit was that terribly cowld, 'at the sweat draps wis no shüner foarmed upon him as they all froze into beads. An he pickit the frozen beads o sweat aff o'm, aff o his broo an aff o his face, an he pat them i the gun insteed o the dredge, an he wadded up the gun; an be yun time the polar bear was come pretty near til 'm, an he took the gun til his shooder an he fired at the polar bear an he shot him stark deid wi the frozen beads o sweat!*[16]

It was common to take a fiddle on the ship for entertainment and many fiddle tunes such as *Ollefjord Jack* and *Willafjord* and, indeed, songs and ballads were brought back through the whaling and mercantile shipping industries. The archive has a large repertoire of Shetland fiddle tunes, much of it gathered and organised by Peter Cooke. Songs served a functional purpose aboard ship as described by John Barclay whose father was a shanty man:

> *Peter Cooke: You say your father was a shanty man … was this in the days of sail?*
> *John Barclay: In sail, yes.*

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15 The repertoires of Tom Tulloch and Brucie Henderson, both from Yell, have been investigated by Vilborg Davíðsdóttir as part of her MA thesis 'An Dat's de Peerie Story': Interpreting legends told by Two Shetlanders (University of Iceland, 2011).
16 Tom Tulloch recorded by Alan Bruford, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1978.63.B2; *Tocher* 30, p369. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/81181/5 (March, 2012).

PC: What time was this – the turn of the century?
JB: It must have been … … before the turn of the century, about 1885 to 1900.
PC: What routes was he sailing on?
JB: He was sailing round the Horn and up the west coast of America, Guyana … He would sing to the men and of course they would keep time.
PC: And that was his job?
JB: Well not exactly a job but …
PC: He was a deckhand?
JB: He was one of the sailors but then when they were any rope pulling to be done he got clear of that – he sang and they knew the exact time to pull on …
PC: As a shanty man … did he make up songs?
JB: Well of course they did, they had these shanties you know – you'll hear that … the crowd doon in England there – of course they have these shanty songs that's suitable for drawin room singin but of course the sailors they used to put in all sorts of words … the songs they had to amuse themselves wi …
PC: And did he not have to do the pulling?
JB: No, no, he was just singing and they knew the exact time to pull[17].

Songs lyrics also reflected voyages and disaster and one of those with particular resonance in Shetland is the *Wreck of the Pacific*, telling the story of a ship that went down near Whalsay in 1871. The cargo of timber collected around Fetlar, Unst and Yell. Needless to say it was rescued and well used on these treeless islands despite the efforts of police and customs officers. (A scene that is perhaps reminiscent of the sinking of the *SS Politician* near Barra in later years, with its cargo of whisky.)

The great storms in Shetland are well remembered and the archive contains various descriptions of the storm of 1881, July 4th, heard first hand from the previous generation. Ten boats were lost at sea and 58 men

17 John Barclay interviewed by Peter Cooke. Transcription by Cathlin Macaulay. School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1972.097.

died. Those who survived have passed on vivid accounts of their attempts to reach home.

It was not just the vagaries of the sea itself that were feared. In the early part of the 19th century the pressgangs roamed. Sometimes those coming back from the whaling were captured before they reached home. There are tales of men pretending they were dead or simple in order to escape, and there were many hiding places. Robert Slater from Trondra, discusses these:

> *They was this old man 'at lived over here; he was Irvine, perhaps James Irvine, but my people, they used to say at he was the Laird, the Laird o Houll – that was the land right across here* [from Trondra] *but I've never really found his name in any book so I canna be fairly certain but I think that he owned the land anyhow. An i the days o the press-gaing, he seem't to – somehow or ither – get the information, that he knew when they were comin. An there wis a family as far as I know they were Moncreiffs, 'at lived over in the valley 'at they call the valley o Uradale – that's jist on the ither side, aest side o Cliff Soond – and they hed a peat stack built in the hill, but it was hollow inside, it was jist two waals, you know, jist roofed over wi ether peats or earth or something like that to cover – make a bit o a roof ower it; 'Coorse it would ha been completely disguised. But anyhow it was oapen so 'at the sons used to go inside this stack, when the waarnin came 'at this pressgang … wis near. And then their old man, their father, he'd ha been too old for them to take: and this old man* [the Laird] *must ha been too old, or they would ha taken him … … So the pressgaing, they might come roond an look but there wis nothin to be seen, there wis jist a peat stack standin in the hill… … There wis anither hidin place 'at seemingly some o them used … … that's a little loch back over the hill here, you canna see it from here: but there wis a burn 'at ran into this loch … … I think it's from the west … … and the burn seemingly had worked a hole in the aerth, like a pit: as far as I can understand it was never dug oot, nobody ever dug it oot, but it wis quite deep so 'at men could go there an [be] almost invisible.*[18]

18 Robert Slater, Trondra, recorded by Alan Bruford, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1974.214 A2–4, *Tocher* 29 p308.

The contours of the landscape are central in many tales and historical events and place-names can be very evocative. There are descriptions in the archives of features such as springs and wells with curative powers. Other water cures include imbibing salt water to ward off seasickness, and water in which mice had been boiled to cure bedwetting.

Discussion of traditional knowledge includes information about telling the time using the sun and stars, and reading the signs to predict the weather through bird behaviour, for example:

> *Brucie Henderson: In Shetland wance in time dey hed a wadder gless an dat wadder gless is still goin strong in Shetland yit … hit wis a bird. An hit wis da red throated diver … Weel, we call her da rain goose or da red throated diver. Well, dey wir a lot o Shetlanders at kent whit sho said an whit it is at sho says whin it's goin ta be good wadder is --*
> *"Drowt ower aa, drowt ower aa, drowt ower aa."*

Brucie Henderson, South Yell (Peter Cooke, 1970)

An whit sho says whin he's goin ta change an be waer wadder --
"Waer wadder an waer weet, waer wadder an waer weet."
Dat's whit sho cries. An if you pay attention till her properly you wid swear at dat's whit sho's sayin.
Alan Bruford: She has the two calls?
BH: Yes. An dan dey said --
Whin da rain gus gengs ta da hill let a man poo doon his boats an fill
Whin da rain gus gengs ta da sea let a man poo up his boats an flee.
AB: She only went out in stormy weather, when it was going to be rough.
BH: Yes. So dey said.[19]

Work was hard and unremitting. Celebrating events and seasonal customs broke up the year. Guising took place at Halloween and during Yule, a 24 day festival, leading up to the New Year. Kitty Laurenson described events in Delting relating to Yule to Elisabeth Neilsen.

In my day, years ago, children used ta go a good deal a-guising, on Hallowe'en Nights and Christmas Eve nights, New Year's Eve nights. And, of course, hit wis long dark nights at dis time an we used ta go from house ta house with a melodeon, sometimes a mouth organ, sometimes a tin whistle. An you had to be able to play a tune or two, always somebody could play a tune. And they wir six ta dance, which is whit's needed fur a Shetland reel. The tune would be da Flowers o Edinburgh or the Soldier's Joy or somethin like that, sometimes an old Shetland tune. But it was mostly all Scotch tunes in my day.

Well, we went to the door and said Happy New Year or Hallowe'en, Gud Hallowe'en, if it wis Hallowe'en time, an everybody wis welcome. So da door wid be opened an in we'd go an we had on masks, sometimes straw suits, which was a skirt made of straw and another kind of skirt which went around the shoulders like a shoulder cape. And a hat

19 Brucie Henderson, Yell, recorded by Alan Bruford. Transcribed by Angus Johnson. School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1970.243. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/66840/2 (March, 2012) Another version by Calum Maclean, SA1954.115.5.

made oot of straw and the ends plaited an stuck up till it was a great height above our heads. And we'd go in and dance dis reel on da floor and everybody wis pleased ta see you. Sometimes dey gave us sweeties, sometimes an apple or an orange if it wis aboot Christmas, though it wisna very plentiful in those days, we only saw it aboot Christmas. It wis never brought inta da shops durin da rest o da year. But everybody wis glad ta see da peerie guisers an we wid say, thank you an shout Gud New Year ta you or Happy Christmas, according as the time wid be, go away on ta da nixt hoose.
Elisabeth Neilsen: What did you call the guisers, what was the Shetland name?
Kitty Laurenson: Dey wir just guisers. Skekklers sometimes, dey wir called. I don't know if dir called skekklers in any other place.
EN: That was up in your place?
KL: That was up in Delting. Oh weel, dey hed da same habits in Yell or Nesting, Lunnasting, all round. It was never a nice Christmas or New'rday here when you didn't see a peerie guiser. An sometimes da big boys wid go on Christmas Day in da afternoon. They wid dress up, of course, and they wid have a fiddle an go aboot from house to house. And they always had a game of football on Christmas Day. They got up early in the morning an sometimes goin guising first thing. Den dey wid go off ta da fitba green an play da ba. An dan dey wid dance at night, usually New Year's Night dey danced, dey never ever left a New Year oot withoot havin a dance, dey thought dat wis bad luck.[20]

Guising has a long tradition in Shetland and the Western Isles. George Nelson indicates that the word *skekkler* is a corruption of *skuddler*, originating from the crew of the boat known as the s*kudda*. The chief guiser or skuddler was the steersman. The older custom, *St Mary's Men,* involved men rather than children. Dressed in straw costumes they would

20 Kitty Laurenson, Delting recorded by Elisabeth Neilsen, SA1961.89.A5. Transcription by Angus Johnson. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/41323/5 (March 2012).

go round the houses singing, with a creel or kishie, the carrying horse, to collect gifts.[21]

Divination was common at these liminal times of year, especially Halloween, often to find out a future spouse. Common practices involved objects such as shirts, turning the sark, wool, ash. Andrew Hunter describes cutting an apple in two, and standing in front of a mirror holding it on a fork behind you. Your future partner would come and pick at it and you would see their image. Johnsmas or Midsummer was another important point in the year and Kitty Laurenson describes the associated customs:

> *Johnsmas in my time wis celebrated on the fifth of July and the feast that we hed wis on da fourth of July, the night of the fourth. And people say nowadays that Johnsmas is da 24th of June which wis the eve of the 25th and Johnsmas, of course, is St John's birthday, and half a year before Christ's birthday. But in my time it was the old style that was held. That's the fourth of July. And we separated the sexes, of course, as they do in this description you have. And the girls would be in one hoose, the boys would be in another. And each had a bit of a feast an we never went ta bed on Johnsmas Eve. Now there was a superstition that you could take your neighbour's profit, that is stop his corn ta grow or his tatties ta grow, if you had a grudge against him, by staying up and doing certain things, on Johnsmas Eve. But in my time my people didna believe in it, you see, and we had just a bit of a children's party.*
>
> *But one thing we used ta do, wis we got whit wis Johnsmass flooers, wi a certain flooer, I'm not quite sure of da name of it bit it hed a black head and yalloo seeds on it. And you plucked off da yalloo seeds and rolled this, a pair of the black heads, wi da stalks, in a dock leaf and you hid it away under a fell, a bit of earth someplace. And nobody knew where you put it, and you named dis for your partner, whidder you were ta be married or not. Maybe if you had a sweetheart, you wid name it for him. An you pat*

21 George Nelson, Tingwall recorded by Elisabeth Neilsen, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1961.90. There are various versions of the song *St Mary's Men*, See *Tocher* 20, p142.

> *it dere all night, an if in da morning, whin da sun rose, da seeds had grown on again den, of coorse, you wir goin ta be all right, you wir goin ta be married an have a family an all da rest o it. Bit if dey wir nothin growin on da seeds, on da pods, dan, of coorse, it was goin ta be a failure.*
>
> *An another thing we did wis ta cut a hol in da ground ta see our fortune, we took a big knife an cut a deep hol in da ground an saw at dey wir no worms or clocks* [beetles] *or anything at all alive in dis hol, put back da bit o earth an laid a ston on it an left it till nixt morning. An whitever wis in da hol wid give you an idea of whit your future wis ta be. If dey wir plenty o wirms an maybe forky tails or bits o clocks an things, dan you wir goin ta be very fortunate an have plenty in your hoose. Dis hol apparently represented your hoose, fur all future time.*
>
> *Bit den, of coorse, … da boys never let da girls see dir hols, an da girls never let da boys see dir hols. Because some times you wid fin wheer things in your hols if dey found out where you'd cut dis hol.*
>
> *We always hed a feast on Johnsmas an we always had whit we caad milgruel, hit wis oatmeal porridge made on milk, milk that had not been creamed, just as it came from the cow an it wis very, very good indeed. I widna mind haein a plate da night fur me supper.*[22]

Milk was a very important part of a subsistence diet and there are a number of ways in which it was served – fresh and sour, liquid and solid. Incidentally, many of the accounts of witchcraft centre on profit taking which would stop the milk from turning into butter. There were various ways of working out who the witch was, and of providing counter charms. Witches also had the power to overturn boats, raise storms and were generally to be feared and there are descriptions of the last hangings for the offence of witchcraft in Scalloway.

Oats and bere were grown and used for various foods including the bannocks and cakes made to celebrate different times of the ritual year.

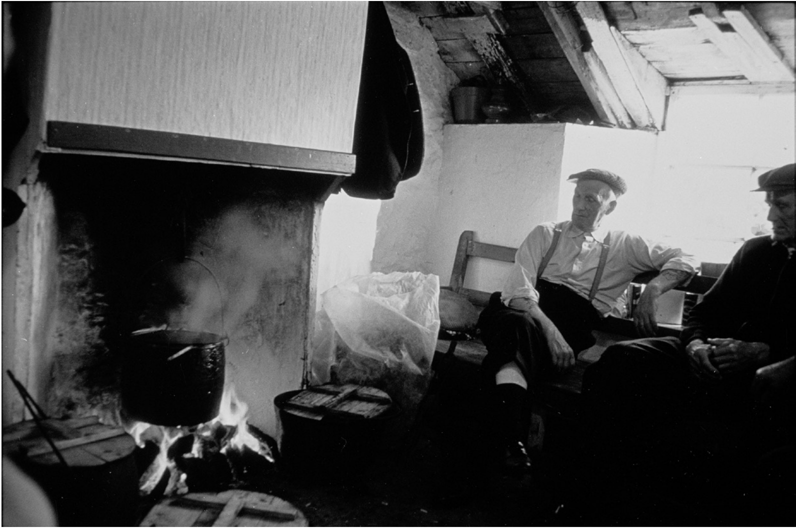
22 Kitty Laurenson, Delting recorded by Elisabeth Neilsen, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1961.89.A5. Transcription by Angus Johnson. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/42183/56 (March 2012).

A special oaten cake was used to crumble over the bride during a wedding and this was a time of great feasting and fun.

Fish and meat generally provided an important part of the diet and were preserved by salting and drying. In a subsistence economy it was important to use all of the animal, as Laura Malcolmson describes, nothing was wasted:

> *They even hid the hooves for glue, and then the puddings or … the tripe part was made into puddings just like the haggis but different puddings some floury puddings and mealy puddings and there were some that … made the blood, blood puddings… … and then the entrails of the sheep was often used to… that's the small gut was often cleaned very particularly an threaded and striped* [stripped] *until it came very, very thin an you stretched them, you washed them an stretched them and then you doubled straw an you striped them as clean as could be. This also took off the fat you know, the extra fat … … and after there were nothing left but the skin and that was stretched out and then you always wound this … wet it and wound it round a piece of wood or even a peat and dried it so far and then startit the process over again… … wash it particularly clean and stretch and stretch and wash again and stretch. And then latterly they were put in a wheel and they were spun through a spinning wheel and then they used to make the band or the belt for going around and driving the wheel. And the trimming band … where you used to put it into the fly of the wheel that was a thinner … … that was all made from sheep's guts. And it was more pliable than cord or anything like that. … … I've seen it done, time and time again. So they were nothing wasted and then the skins, if they were flayed round, they werena split open. They were used to make the fisherman's bows* [buoys] *to keep their nets up and the womenfolk used them as buggies* [baggies] *for to keep their wool in when they were having the cardings.*[23]

23 Laura Malcomson, Cunningsburgh, recorded by Alan Bruford, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1970.236. Transcription by Cathlin Macaulay. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/64870/7.



Cooks' House, Whalsay (Peter Cooke 1973)

It took a lot of work to maintain a household and this continued into the evening. As women were spinning and men were making straw rope, entertainment might consist of fiddle music, riddles or stories. The following riddles or guddicks were recounted by Robina Bruce:

> Twa gray bairds lyin i da sty,
> Da mair dey get da mair dey cry
> Da lesser dey get da stiller dey lie.
> I wis comin ower da rigs o' Bressay,
> I met me sister Annie,
> I aff wi her heid,
> I drank her bluid,
> I left her body staundin.[24]

24 Answers: the mill grinding [millstones], a bottle of whisky. Robina Bruce recorded by Calum Maclean, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1954.107.2. Audio: http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/en/fullrecord/32820/2.

The supernatural, pressgangs, sheep, food. The following story mentions all of these topics. It is recounted by Tom Anderson from whom there is much material in the archive in his capacity as fiddler, fieldworker, teacher and scholar:

> *This is Innbanks we're sitting at here, at Mangersta Voe. There's a story told to me by an old lady many years ago. The story goes back to the time of the war with France, you know, the time of the pressgang and the French privateers. It's said that the privateer came in here, a French vessel came in here, and they were needing food, they were needing vegetables, they were needing everything and they saw this was a croft. Of course they knew they would probably plunder the thing. And the captain said, 'Let's send a party ashore and we'll seize some sheep and some cattle.' The doctor on board the ship, the surgeon, ship's surgeon said, 'No, do it my way first before we do any bloodshed or anything'.*
>
> *So he went ashore with the boat's crew and he went up to the house. And the story goes now – and I'll continue it as the old people told it afterwards – that the man came up, and was very nice, shook hands, he could speak English. And he told them they'd a very beautiful place, he said, and 'Look round there', he said. 'Look at all the animals and look at all the strange things you see.'*
>
> *And he said the old lady and the old gentleman, the crofter and his wife, they looked and what they saw were huge birds sitting on top of huge trees. There were beautiful flowers, there were high trees and there were like wild animals going round, striped like tigers and a huge, huge thing like a dog only it was about the size of a horse. And the daughter who was ben the hoose came but in the middle of this and she was inclined to be a bit – 'What was all this going on?'*
>
> *And he turned to her and said, 'Don't you see?'*
>
> *And she says, 'I'm not so sure, I only see darkly,' she says, 'I don't see' she says, 'There's something wrong here, it's like a mist'.*
>
> *And he said. 'Alright' he says, 'you go to bed, and you'll be in bed for two days'. And he said, 'You won't get out of bed until midnight, tomorrow night'.*

And they left and the old people sat there for hours and then when they came to they looked and just in a flash, just in the twinkling of an eye, they looked, and what they were looking at was the sterlings [starlings] *as we call them now, sterlings and the sparrows sitting on the dockens. And the cats – they had four cats – and the cats were going round. All their sheep had gone, most of the sheep had gone and they'd left them one cow. The girl slept and they couldn't get her wakened until midnight the following night when she woke up, completely ok … …*

A direct descendent of the lady who lived in this house told me that story. That happened during the French wars in the early 1800s cause the Pressgang was going up until about 1816, 17 so presumably that was sometime between 1800 and 1816, 17 … that's the story, Maggie.[25]

This small selection of material from Shetland has, I hope, given a glimpse of the range of voices in the archives and an insight into islands' culture. Listening to the audio material collected now and over the past sixty years – the individual expression of each voice, the intricacies of dialect, the emotional nuances, the musical intonation – we have a sense of immediacy, intimacy and connection that the written word alone cannot adequately convey. Through this artistry of the ordinary, we can both illuminate and move beyond the everyday.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Angus Johnson, Doreen Waugh, Peter Cooke, Stuart Robinson, Colin Gateley, Caroline Milligan.

25 Tom Anderson recorded by Margaret Mackay, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA1970.303 *Tocher* 4 p105.

'Cuir siud sa' Ghàidhlig': toradh na h-obrach aig Fear Chanaigh[1]

Hugh Cheape

Professor Hugh Cheape has devised and teaches a postgraduate programme, MSc Cultar Dùthchasach agus Eachdraidh na Gàidhealtachd, at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture. He holds a Research Chair in the University of the Highlands and Islands. The MSc has grown out of his curatorial and ethnological work during a career in the National Museums of Scotland where latterly he was Principal Curator in the Department of Scotland and Europe. He joined the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland in 1974 as a Research Assistant with Professor Sandy Fenton in the former Country Life Section and regularly collaborated with the School of Scottish Studies, frequently giving and participating in Research Seminars for staff and students. He was closely involved with the creation of the Angus Farming Life Museum in the Angus Folk Museum, the National Museum of Scotland, the Museum of Scottish Country Life at Wester Kittochside (now the National Museum of Rural Life) and the Museum of Piping in the National Piping Centre. He has published widely in the subject fields of ethnology and musicology, including studies in Scottish agricultural history, vernacular architecture, piping, tartans and dye analysis, pottery, charms and amulets and talismanic belief. His books include Periods in Highland History *(1987) with I F Grant,* The Highland Habit *(1991),* Witness to Rebellion *(1996) with Iain Gordon Brown,* The Book of the Bagpipe *(1999),* Bagpipes: A national collection of a national instrument *(2008) and he has edited* Tools and Traditions: Studies in European Ethnology presented to Alexander Fenton *(1993) and* 'A very civil people': Hebridean Folk, History, and Tradition; Essays by John Lorne Campbell *(2000). In 1992, he was asked by the National Trust for Scotland to support their work with Dr John Lorne Campbell of Canna, and following the latter's death in 1996, Hugh Cheape was appointed his executor and literary executor, and from 1997 worked with the School of Scottish Studies on the Tobar an Dualchais / Kist o Riches project to ensure the preservation of John Lorne Campbell's sound archive.*

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1 Air 24–26 an Lùnastal 2011, chaidh co-labhairt a chumail ann an Learaig a' comharrachadh 60 bliadhna bhon a chaidh Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba a stèidheachadh ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Eideann ann an 1951. 'S e tionndadh anns a' Ghàidhlig a tha anns an aiste seo air òraid a chaidh a lìbhrigeadh anns a' Bheurla aig co-labhairt na Sgoile.

B' e sàr sgoilear na Gàidhlig a bh' ann an Iain Latharna Caimbeul agus b' àbhaist dha comhairle dhìreach a chuimhneachadh mar 'Cuir siud sa' Ghàidhlig!' a fhuaireadh bho sheann charaid dha. Chanadh e fhèin gur e tuathanach a bha ann, mar a chuir e seachad na bliadhnaichean ri àiteachas ann an Eilean Chanaigh. Air an taobh seo, chanadh iad 'Fear Chanaigh' ris fad iomadh bliadhna agus bhon a dh'imrich e gu Canaigh ann an 1938. Air taobh eile agus fo shealladh na sgoilearachd, chuir e seachad faisg air ceithir fichead bliadhna fad a bheatha a' sgrùdadh agus a' clàradh cànan agus eachdraidh nan Gàidheal, gu h-àraidh nan Gàidheal anns na h-Eileanan far an robh e a' fuireach am measg muinntir Bharraigh, muinntir Uidhist agus, na b'fhaide air adhart, muinntir Chanaigh.[2] Thug saothair na h-obrach aig Iain Latharna Caimbeul buaidh agus taic air leth do Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba an uair a chaidh a stèidheachadh an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann ann an 1951.

Rugadh Iain Latharna Caimbeul an 1906 ann an Dùn Èideann, ged a bha an teaghlach aige a' buntainn do Shiorramachd Earra Ghàidheal. B' e 'Clann Theàrlaich' sloinneadh an teaghlaich ainmeil seo, Caimbeulaich Inbhir Nèill agus Taigh Nis. Sin far an d'fhuair e àrach aig àite aigneach grinn, Taigh Mòr Inbhir Nèill, a bha na phàirt den oighreachd a cheannaich a shinnsear, Gilleasbuig Caimbeul, nuair a thàinig e dhachaigh bho na h-Innsean ann an 1779 le fortan agus cnap mòr airgid.

Fhuair Iain Latharna fhoghlam ann an sgoil bheag ann an Dùn Èideann, 'Cargilfield', agus ann an sgoil mhòr airson còig bliadhna ann an Sasainn, Sgoil 'Rugby', mar am bu dual do na h-uaislean Albannach anns na linntean sin. An dèidh nan sgoiltean, chuir e seachad bliadhna anns an Fhraing a' togail na Fraingis, agus an dèidh sin fad tri bliadhnaichean, bha e ann an Oilthigh Baile nan Damh no Oxford aig Colaiste Naoimh Eòin, a' ceumnachadh ann an 1929. Thòisich e air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh an dèidh dha daoine òga às na h-Eileanan a chluinntinn a' bruidhinn

2 Airson eachdraidh a bheatha, faic na leanas: John Lorne Campbell, *'A very civil people'. Hebridean Folk History and Tradition* (deas. le Hugh Cheape) Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd 2000, ix–xiv; Hugh Cheape, John Lorne Campbell, scholar, folklorist and farmer, *ROSC (Review of Scottish Culture)* Number 10 (1996–1997), 1–4.

na Gàidhlig ann an dòigh an dà chuid fileanta agus tarraingeach aig Geamaichean Gàidhealach ann an Òban Latharna mu 1925. Fhuair e blasad beag dhen chànan le Tirisdeach, Eachann MacIlleathain, a bha na mhaor air Oighreachd Thaigh Nis. Chuala e an uair sin òrain Ghàidhlig anns na cèilidhean agus searmonan anns an eaglais, agus thuirt e ris fhèin gum b' e sin rud a bu chòir a bhith aige.

Choisinn e ceum ann an 'Tuathanachas' agus 'Eaconomaidh Dhùthchail' aig an oilthigh agus b' ann am Baile nan Damh a thachair e gu fortanach ri fìor Ghàidheal, an t-Àrd-Ollamh Iain Friseal, a bha na shàr sgoilear clasaigeach ann an Laideann is Greugais agus na sgoilear cànanachais aig ìre eadar-nàiseanta. B' ann à Druim na Drochaid is Gleann Urchardan bho thùs a bha am Frisealach còir agus bha e fhèin a' teagasg na seann Ghàidhlig Èireannaich ann an Roinn na Ceiltis ann am Baile nan Damh eadar 1915 agus 1945 an dèidh dha gluasad bho Oilthigh Obar Dheathain. An uair a bha Iain Latharna na oileanach, chuireadh buidheann bheag no 'Comann Gàidhlig Baile nan Damh' air chois le cuid de na h-oileanaich air an robh ùidh mhòr anns a' chànan. Thug an t-Àrd-Ollamh misneachadh mòr dhaibh mar 'Cheann Suidhe' dhan chomann, agus gu h-àraidh do dh'Iain Latharna a thaobh a' chànain agus le obair rannsachaidh air leabhar seann bhàrdachd a dheasachadh. Mhothaich Iain Latharna gum b' àbhaist do na h-ùghdaran Gallda sgrìobhadh mu na Gàidheil mar *'rebels in search of booty'* tro linn Ar-a-mach nan Seumasach anns an 18mh linn agus, bho nach robh sin fìor, bha e airson tionndadh eile a chur air a' chuspair. Chuir e a-mach rannsachadh fo stiùireadh an Fhrisealaich anns an leabhar *Òrain Ghàidhlig mu Bhliadhna Theàrlaich* a nochd anns a' Ghearran 1933.[3] Ach thug am Proifeasair dha misneachadh agus stiùireadh le obair rannsachaidh ann an cànan agus litreachas na Gàidhlig air fad, agus chanadh Iain Latharna gun do dh'ionnsaich an t-Àrd-Ollamh dha mòran mu dheidhinn leabhar a chur air dòigh, mar eisimpleir air pròiseasan agus dòighean deasachaidh. Nuair a chaochail am

3 Iain Latharna Caimbeul, *Duain Ghàidhealach mu Bhliadhna Theàrlaich*. Dùn-Eideann: Iain Grannd 1933 (Revised Edition. Edinburgh: Scottish Gaelic Texts Society 1984).

Frisealach ann an 1945, fhuair Iain Latharna cothrom air na leabhraichean aige a cheannach bhon mhnaoi aige agus fhuaireadh anns a' bhad clach-bhuinn dha obair sgoileireil Fear Chanaigh.

Aig an dearbh àm a nochd an leabhar ùr aige, chuir e lethbhreac dheth gu Compton Mackenzie a bha an uair sin a' fuireach ann am Barraigh agus a' rèiteachadh eachdraidh-beatha a' Phrionnsa Theàrlaich Eideard Stiùbhairt. Am measg nam bàrd a bha a' toirt taic do na Seumasaich agus don Phrionnsa, agus air an robh Iain Latharna a' toirt sùil an *Òrain Ghàidhlig mu Bhliadhna Theàrlaich*, b' e Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair a bh' aig teis-meadhan na h-obrach rannsachaidh aige. Bha ùidh shònraichte aig Iain Latharna ann an Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair agus air a bhàrdachd nach d'fhuair riamh deasachadh ceart a rèir coltais. B' àbhaist dha beachdachadh gun fheumte a dhà no trì leabhraichean a chur a-mach bho na rinn agus na sgrìobh am bàrd eadar Gàidhlig agus Beurla agus nach robh furasda mìneachadh. A thuilleadh air Ò*rain Ghàidhlig mu Bhliadhna Theàrlaich*, chuir Iain Latharna an clò tro na bliadhnaichean a leanadh obair rannsachaidh mhionaideach air bàrdachd agus cànan mhic Mhaighstir Alasdair, gu h-àraidh anns an iris sgoileireil, *Scottish Gaelic Studies*.[4]

Tha Iain Latharna Caimbeul fhathast ainmeil ann an saoghal na sgoilearachd leis mar a rinn e fhèin clàraidhean le innealan meacanigeach de dh'òrain, sgeulachdan, beul-aithris agus seanchas air feadh na Gàidhealtachd eadar Alba agus thall thairis ann an Alba Nuadh. Bha Iain Latharna Caimbeul na chiad fhear a rinn an obair luachmhor seo agus, mar sin, bha an obair chlàraidh aige na bun-stèidh dha Tobar an Dualchais,

4 Mar eisimplirean air na chuir Iain Latharna Caimbeul ann an clò air Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair: Some notes on the poems of Alexander MacDonald, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* IV (1935), 18–23; Gaelic MS LXIII of the National Library of Scotland, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* IV (1935), 70–84, 153–204; Some Words from the Vocabulary of Alexander MacDonald, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* VI (1949), 27–42; The second edition of Alexander MacDonald's Poems, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* VI (1949), 43–44; The Royal Irish Academy Text of Birlinn Chlann Raghnaill, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* IX (1961), 39–79; The expurgating of Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* XII (1971), 59–76.

pròiseact nàiseanta le taic bhon Chrannchur Dhualchais a thàinig gu buil anns an Dùbhlachd 2010.[5] Anns an t-seagh seo, thàinig toradh na h-obrach aige còmhla ri tasglannan Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba.

Leis mar a bha Iain Latharna a' còmhnaidh fad a bheatha anns na h-Eileanan seach a bhith a' fuireach anns na bailtean mòra agus a bhith ag obair aig oilthigh, bhiodh e a' toirt a-mach gum b' urrainn dha greim nas cinntiche a ghabhail air a' chànan. Chuir e fhèin cudrom air leth air a' chànan a bh' air bile an t-sluaigh seach mar a b' àbhaist do luchd-teagaisg na Ceiltis roimh an àm sin le bhith ag obair le leabhraichean foirmeil agus gu ìre le gràmar is cànan a' Bhìobaill. Chuala e Gàidhlig air bile an t-sluaigh an uair a bha e òg ann an Earra Ghàidheal, agus dh'ionnsaich e i ann an dòigh fhoirmeil aig Oilthigh Oxford far an d'fhuair e oideachadh ceart bhon Àrd-Ollamh Iain Frisealach. Thug an t-Àrd-Ollamh comhairle do dh'Iain Latharna air taobh a' chànain gun fheumadh neach-ionnsachaidh a bhith am measg nan daoine a bha ga bruidhinn am bitheantas agus gheibheadh e an cànan aig an t-sluagh nas cinntiche na cànan a leughadh e anns na leabhraichean. Bhiodh e ag ràdh nach e cànan air fad a th' anns na leabhraichean agus gun fheumadh tu a dhol a-mach am measg nan daoine. Theireadh an t-Àrd-Ollamh a h-uile turas a chluinneadh tu facal no briathar nach cuala tu roimhe, sgrìobh sìos anns an leabhar-làimhe iad a chionn 's nach robh a h-uile pìos dhen chànan anns na faclairean idir.

Thoisich an obair beatha ionmholta aig Iain Latharna Caimbeul ann an 1933. Bhiodh e ag innse mar a chaidh cuibhle a bheatha mun cuairt le cinnt air 4mh den Lùnastal anns a' bhliadhna seo an uair a thàinig e air tìr ann am Barraigh. Chuir e crìoch air an leabhar sgoileireil aige agus chaidh e a-null gu Barraigh le cuireadh bho Compton MacCoinnich a bha a' cur crìoch air an leabhar aige fhèin air beatha a' Phrionnsa le taic bho Iain Latharna. Troimhe sin, bha e a' dol a dh'Inbhirnis air bus agus thachair e ri fear à Barraigh, Iain Mac a' Phearsain (1876–1955), duine ainmeil fon fhar-ainm, 'Coddy' no 'A' Choddy'. Bha esan na Chomhairliche Siorramachd Inbhir Nis agus na sheanchaidh Barrach iomraiteach.

5 www.tobarandualchais.co.uk

John Macpherson, 'The Coddy', Northbay, Isle of Barra, about 1935. Coddy was John Lorne Campbell's first host in Barra in 1934.

Thòisich iad a' bruidhinn agus thuirt e ri Iain Latharna gum bu chòir dha tighinn a Bharraigh. Chaidh Iain Latharna a-null agus fhuair e àite-fuirich còmhla ris a' Choddy ann am Bàgh a Tuath. Dh'ionnsaich e Gàidhlig bhuaithe agus bhiodh e ag ràdh gum b' ann bhon Choddy a b' fheàrr a dh'ionnsaich e na bho dhuine sam bith eile. Bha beachd aige co-dhiù mu na thuirt an t-Àrd-Ollamh Frisealach air an taobh seo ach b' e an rud as cudthromaiche dha nach do leig A' Choddy leis Beurla a bhruidhinn idir agus chanadh Coddy daonnan ris: 'Cuir siud sa' Ghàidhlig! Cuir siud sa' Ghàidhlig – abair sin fhathast Iain!'.[6] Bha Iain Latharna ag ionnsachadh cuideachd bhon teaghlach chomasach Bharrach, Anna NicIain, no Anna Aonghais Chaluim, a bha na bana-thidsear ann an Sgoil Bhàgh a' Chaisteil

6 John Lorne Campbell editor, *Tales of Barra told by the Coddy*. Edinburgh: W & A K Johnston 1961, 24.

agus a bràthair, Calum Aonghais Chaluim, a bha a' fuireach ann an Dùn Èideann an uair sin.[7]

Ann am Barraigh, thachair Iain Latharna Caimbeul ri saoghal annasach luachmhor far an robh an sluagh gu lèir a' bruidhinn anns a' Ghàidhlig agus far an deachaidh seanchas agus beul-aithris air ais gu ruige linn nan Lochlannach. Leis mar a bha Iain Latharna a' sireadh cànain agus briathrachais iomchaidh airson a shaothrach, chuireadh A' Choddy e an aithne ri Barraich aig an robh comas anabarrach a thaobh a' chànain, an dà chuid comas sgrìobhaidh agus comas labhairt. Mar sin, thachair Iain Latharna ri 'James MacKinnon', no Seumas Iain Ghunnaraidh mar a chanadh iad ris, a bha na fhear aig an robh seann naidheachdan agus sgeulachdan, agus b' e duine anabarrach sgileil a bh' ann dhan innse. Chuireadh e seachad grunn fheasgaran aig taigh Sheumais a' cluich chairtean agus ag ionnsachadh a' chànain làitheil bho chòmhradh Sheumais agus Alasdair Aonghais Mhòir seach cànan nan leabhraichean. Sin mar a thòisich Iain Latharna air cànan agus sgeulachdan a thogail, agus a' sgrìobhadh Gàidhlig agus a' fàs, mean air mhean, cleachdte ri gnàthasan-cainnt nam Barrach. Uidheamaichte le Gàidhlig nan leabhraichean uime mu thràth, chluinneadh e faclan, briathrachas agus abairtean nach cuala e riamh roimhe.

Chuir Iain Latharna Caimbeul sìos air pàipear na h-òrain agus na sgeulachdan a bha aig an t-sluagh ach dh'aithnich e nach robh an dòigh obrach seo uile gu lèir a' dèanamh an gnothach ris. Bha innealan-clàraidh ri làimh thall anns na Stàitean agus mar a bha màthair Iain Latharna na ban-Ameireaganach, fhuair e cothrom le tursan a-null thairis a bhith a' ceannach 'Ediphone Wax Cylinder Recorder' a bha ag obrachadh tro obair-uaireadair. Thòisich e le 'Ediphone' agus thionndaidh e gu inneal ùr ris an canadh iad 'Presto Disc Recorder' agus na dhèidh gu 'Webster Wire Recorder', agus an dèidh sin thàinig tèip a-steach. Bha na h-innealan a' tighinn a-mach cho bitheanta aig an àm agus cha bhiodh iad ag obair ceart no bhiodh uireasbhaidhean ann. A rèir na dh'innseadh Iain Latharna, bha an 'Webster Recorder' uamhasach math agus na chiad inneal den t-seorsa a bha a' ruith

7 Faic *Tocher* 13 (1974), 162, far an do sgrìobh Fear Chanaigh mu bheatha agus toradh an dithis, Anna agus Calum Aonghais Chaluim.

Annie Johnson, Anna Aonghais Chaluim, Schoolteacher in Castlebay, Barra, facilitated John Lorne Campbell's early recording work in Barra and was a moving force in the Barra Folklore Committee.

fad leth-uair a thìde air gach taobh dhen 'wire' agus, mar sin, chuireadh tu sgeulachd fada air nach gabhadh a dhèanamh leis na h-innealan eile.

'S e Coddy a thuirt do dh'Iain Latharna an uair sin: 'Oh, tha Ediphone agaibh a-nis agus feumaidh sibh na h-òrain aig Ruairi Iain Bhàin a recòrdadh – mar an tèid air chall iad.' An uair a thachair Iain Latharna ri Ruairi Iain Bhàin, no 'Roderick MacKinnon' mar a chante ris anns a' Bheurla, thuig e nach robh duine coltach ris air na seann òrain. Bha esan làn de sgeulachdan agus de dh'òrain agus sgrìobh Iain Latharna nach b' aithne dha seinneadair dhen t-seòrsa sin a b' fheàrr na esan. Le bhith a' seinn anns an t-seann nòs, chan fheumadh e òran chluinntinn ach dà uair agus bhiodh e aige. Aig an àm seo, bha Ruairidh Iain Bhàin na seann duine; rugadh e fhèin ann an 1858 agus bha tòrr dhaoine ann ris an robh Iain Latharna Caimbeul a' tachairt ann am Barraigh a rugadh anns an 19mh linn. Thog Iain Latharna iomradh-bàis luachmhor air Ruairidh Iain Bhàin nuair a dh'eug e air an 17mh den Ògmhios 1944, le beachd gur e am fear mu dheireadh ann an Alba aig an robh na h-Òrain Mhòra. Shàbhail Iain Latharna leth-dusan dhe na h-Òrain Mhòra aige.[8]

8 J L Campbell, Ruairi Iain Bhain, *Scots Magazine* (September 1944), 461–463.

An cuideachd A' Choddy agus Anna Aonghais Chaluim, thachair Iain Latharna ri iomadh duine anns an eilean agus dhùisgeadh ùidh mhòr am measg an t-sluaigh anns an obair-chlàraidh aige. Thigeadh daoine ris agus chanadh iad nach dèanadh e clàradh dhe a mhàthair fhad's a bha i beò, leis mar a bha òrain bhrèagha aicese! Dh'aithnich Iain Latharna nach b' fheudar dhasan iarraidh orra agus gun robh muinntir an eilein ag iarraidh air a dhèanamh. Bha Anna Aonghais Chaluim anabarrach eòlach air seann bhoireannaich a bha 'math air òrain' agus bhiodh ise gam moladh a thighinn ri chèile airson cèilidh beag a dhèanamh. A rèir coltais, bhiodh gach tè a' feuchainn ri òran nas fheàrr na an tè roimhe a sheinn! Chruinnich Anna iad gu cèilidhean gum b'urrainn do dh'Iain Latharna na h-òrain a chlàradh agus mar sin, b' ann anns an dòigh seo a chaidh òrain shònraichte annasach a chlàradh, òrain nach cuala na sgoilearan riamh. Aig an àm sin, bha An Canan 'Ewan MacInnes' no Eoghainn Pheadair ann am Barraigh agus thug e misneachd do dh'Iain Latharna am 'Barra Folklore Committee' a chur air dòigh mu 1938. Bhiodh Iain

Roderick MacKinnon, Ruairi iain Bhàin (1858–1944), Northbay, Isle of Barra, 1935. Ruairi Iain Bhàin recorded many examples of 'Na h-Òrain Mòra' for John Lorne Campbell.

Latharna a' fàgail tè leis an inneal-clàraidh aige ann an taigh a' Chanain agus dhèanadh iad cèilidhean leotha fhèin. Anns an dòigh seo, rinn e cruinneachadh mòr de dh'òrain agus bha barrachd na mìle òran aige air 'wire' agus air an tèip.

Bha beachd ann aig an àm seo am measg nan sgoilearan nach robh an còrr ri dhèanamh air taobh a' bheòil-aithris, gun fheumadh gu robh a h-uile naidheachd agus a h-uile òran air a sgrìobhadh sìos cheana o chionn fhada le Marsaili Cheanadach-Fhriseal (1857–1930) agus leis a' Chaimbeulach iomraiteach eile, Iain Òg Ìle (1821–1885), agus nach robh obair eile ri lorg ann. Nuair a bha Iain Latharna Caimbeul ann an Uidhist is Barraigh agus nuair a bha e a' dèanamh obair-clàraidh còmhla ri Francis Collinson airson nan leabhraichean iomraiteach acasan, *Hebridean Folksongs*, bha daoine ann a bha nan clann aig an fheadhainn a bha a' gabhail òrain do Mharsaili. A rèir an dithis sgoilear seo, bha muinntir an eilein a cheart cho math ris na pàrantan aca, bha òrain gu leòr aca agus tòrr a bharrachd òran nach cuala 'Marsaili nan Òran' riamh. A thaobh nan òran a chuir Marsaili chòir ann an clò fo chòmhdach '*Songs of the Hebrides*', chruthaich ise, le taic bhon Urramach Choinneach MhacLeòid, òrain caran coimheach ann an cruth nan ealain – 'art songs' mar gum biodh – agus b' àbhaist do dh'Iain Latharna aithris air barail dhiombach aig an fheadhainn a bha a' cumail suas nam fìor òran anns na h-Eileanan. Tha connspaid ann fhathast an do rinn Marsaili barrachd feum no cron air dualchas nan Gàidheal, ach bhiodh Iain Latharna ag aithris air barail aig cailleach Bharraich air Marsaili gun do mhill i na h-òrain aca![9]

Chuala Iain Latharna Caimbeul gu leòr nuair a bha e ann am Barraigh an toiseach mun tè Ameireaganaich a bha a' togail nan òran ann an Uidhist. B' ann an Uidhist a Deas anns a' Ghearran 1934 a thachair e ris an tè òg seo, Mairead Fay Sheathach, a bha ri Gàidhlig ionnsachadh aig an àm 'ud agus a bha a' sgrìobhadh sìos nan òran agus an t-seanchais am measg nan teaghlaichean Uidhisteach, gu h-àraidh anns an sgìre far an robh i a' còmhnaidh le muinntir Gleann Dail a Tuath. Rugadh Mairead

9 J L Campbell, 'Songs of the Hebrides'. A Reappraisal of Marjory Kennedy Fraser, *Scots Magazine* (1958), 307–314.

Fay Sheathach ann an 1903 ann am Pittsburgh, far an robh a teaghlach an sàs ann an gnìomhachas na stàilinn. Fhuair i oideachas mar cheòladair air a' phiàna agus thàinig i gu Alba ann an 1921. Aig an sgoil far an robh i ann am Bail' Eilidh, bha i a' frithealadh consairt le Marsaili NicUalraig Fhrisealach agus, an dèidh seo, bha Mairead a' miannachadh a bhith ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig gus na h-òrain a thuigsinn bho thùs. Thuig i gun robh i a' cluinntinn òrain ann an cruth nan ealain anns na tionndaidhean aig Marsaili seach na h-òrain chinnteach a bha aig an t-sluagh fhathast. Chaidh Mairead air chuairt do na h-Eileanan le baidhsagal agus camara, agus thoisich i a' togail dhealbhan anns na 20an. Bha i a' lorg àite sònraichte far am b'urrainn dhi Gàidhlig ionnsachadh agus fhuair i àite-fuirich an Gleann Dail ann an Uidhist a Deas, air taobh a deas Loch Baghasdail. Tha sinn eòlach air a beatha tron leabhar fèin-eachdraidh a sgrìobh i, *From the Alleghenies to the Hebride*s, a chaidh fhoillseachadh ann an 1993. Tha sinn eòlach cuideachd air muinntir Loch Baghasdail mu Dheas anns an t-seagh tro leabhar mòr a dheasaich i bho thoradh na h-obrach aice ann an Uidhist eadar 1929 agus 1935, *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist* (1955). Nochd an leabhar ann an cruth ùr ann an 1977, 1986 agus 1999 agus tha e ri làimh agus ri cheannach fhathast. Fhuair an leabhar fìor dheagh sgeul le lèirmheasan ann an Lochlann no Scandinavia aig an toiseach agus fhuair Mairead an aithne air an robh i airidh le ollamhachd bho oilthighean ann am Ameireaga a Tuath, Èirinn agus Alba.

Ann an 1934, bha Iain Latharna air chuairt ann an Uidhist còmhla ri Iain MacAonghais no 'Iain Pheadair', air gnothach Comann Iasgairean na Mara, agus thachair e ri Mairead an Tigh Òsda Loch Baghasdail. Bha Mairead trang le oideachas na Gàidhlig a bha i a' faighinn bho na nàbaidhean aice leis mar a bha i a' fuireach còmhla ri peathraichean MhicRath, Màiri Anndra is Peigi, air taobh a deas Loch Baghasdail, ann an Gleann Dail a Tuath. Fhuair i aoigheachd bho na peathraichean – no rùm air màl – eadar na bliadhnaichean seo an dèidh 1929. Rinn Iain Latharna agus Mairead gealladh pòsaidh agus phòs iad ann an Glaschu air an 15mh den Chèitein 1935 agus bha an t-seirbhis-pòsaidh aca air fad tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig. Thill iad gu Barraigh agus fhuair iad taigh air màl ann am Bàgh a Tuath bhon Choddy.

Aig an àm sin, bha 'cearcall litreachais' cho taitneach ann am Barraigh timcheall air Compton MacCoinnich, sgrìobhadair ainmeil na linne sin. Thog MacCoinnich taigh ùr air machair Eòlgearraidh a tha ri fhaicinn fhathast agus 's e 'Suidheachain' an t-ainm a chuir e air an taigh. Thoisich MacCoinnich agus Iain Latharna Caimbeul a bhith ag obair còmhla air suidheachadh eaconomach, cultarach agus poilitigeach nan eilean air fad, agus le trèanadh àiteachais, bha sealladh domhain is farsaing aig Iain Latharna air suidheachadh èiginneach nan Eileanan an Iar. Thog iad deasbad an aghaidh cìs nan rathaidean ann an 1935,

John Lorne Campbell and Margaret Fay Shaw on the 'Gille Brighde', after their wedding in Glasgow in May 1935.

a' sireadh co-ionnanachd le Breatainn. Sgrìobh iad leabhar còmhla ri Lochlannach agus sgoilear cànanachais, Carl Borgström, a chuir blas eile air eachdraidh muinntir nan Eilean agus a chuir sgeul eadar-dhealaichte air cliù nan Gàidheal. B' e siud 'Leabhar Bharraigh' no '*The Book of Barra*' a nochd ann an 1936. Ach bha cùis eile aca, tòrr na bu chudthromaiche aig ìre phoilitigeach agus an aghaidh dearmad an Riaghaltais, gu bhith a' toirt dìon èifeachdach gu iasgach nan Eilean. Steidhich iad *The Sea League* no 'Comann Iasgairean na Mara' as t-Samhradh 1933, a' faighinn tiotal agus bratach bhon '*Land League*' agus buaidh is feallsanachd bho phoileasaidhean iasgach Nirribhidh, nan Eileanan Fàro agus Innis Tile. Ghabh Iain is Mairead saor-làithean mìos nam pòg ann an Nirribhidh agus shiubhail iad bho Bergen cho fada tuath ri Eileanan Lofoten. Chunnaic esan nach robh na Lochlannaich a' leigeil nan tràlairean no iasgair sam bith bho thaobh a-muigh a thighinn a-staigh chun na fjords leis mar a bha iasgach na ghnìomhachas a bu mhotha aca. Thog Iain Latharna agus MacCoinnich ballrachd mhòr an taic Comann Iasgairean na Mara agus chuir iad air chois iomairt nàiseanta ris a' chùis. Chuir iad ìmpidh air Pàrlamaid Bhreatainn airson ath-leasachadh a dhèanamh ri laghan na mara agus an Cuan Sgìth a dhùnadh air na tràlairean agus beò-shlaint agus teachd-an-tìr muinntir nan Eilean a chumail slàn riutha fhèin. Aig deireadh an sgeòil, cha dèanadh an riaghaltas rud sam bith mun a' chùis aig an àm. Co-cheangailte ris an iomairt seo, chuir Iain Latharna pàipear beag an clò mar bhrath-naidheachd agus brosnachadh poileataigeach a chuairteachadh. Sgrìobhadh 'Pàipear Naidheachd Comunn Iasgairean na Mara' no *The Sea Leaguer* an dà chuid an Gàidhlig is Beurla, agus bha beul-aithris agus seanchas ann a bha a' togail guth is gairm às leth còraichean, cultar agus dìleab nan Gàidheal.[10]

Rinn Iain Latharna Caimbeul dà thuras ann an 1932 agus 1937 do dh'Alba Nuadh airson tadhail air na Gàidheil a bha a' buntainn ris na h-eilthirich a chaidh a-null thairis aig àm nam Fuadaichean anns an 18mh agus 19mh linn. Bha Iain Latharna gu h-àraidh airson coinneachadh ris an

10 J L Campbell, Our Barra Years, *Scots Magazine* (August 1975), 494–503; *Scots Magazine* (September 1975), 613–623.

t-sluagh Bharrach ann an Ceap Breatainn, mar a bha gu leòr dhiubh ann agus feadhainn dhiubh a rèir coltais anabarrach math air na h-òrain. Bha Gàidhlig fhathast cumanta agus dh'fhaodadh tu Gàidhlig a bhruidhinn ri duine sam bith nas sine na mu dheich bliadhna fichead de dh'aois. Rinn e 'cunntas sluaigh Gàidhealaich' ann an Eilean Ceap Breatainn agus tro na sgìrean air tìr mòr Alba Nuaidh, ann an Siorramachd Antigonish gu sònraichte, obair rannsachaidh nach do rinn duine riamh roimhe. Eadar sliochd nan Uidhisteach, nam Barrach, nam Mùideartach agus nan Abrach a bha fhathast ann an Alba Nuadh agus Ceap Breatainn agus a bha a' glèidheadh nan seann òran, bha Iain Latharna air facail is fuinn a chlàradh a bha dìleas do chànan nan sinnsirean aca ged a dh'fhàg a' mhòr chuid dhiubh an t-seann dùthaich còrr is 150 bliadhna roimhe. Chuala Iain Latharna na h-òrain a bha aithnichte fhathast ann an Alba agus an fheadhainn nach cuala e riamh. Bha seann òrain Abrach ann, mar eisimpleir, na h-òrain aig Aonghas MacDhòmhnaill, no 'Aonghas a' Mhàim' no 'Ridge' ann an Màbu, ach cha chluinneadh iad a-bhos air an taobh seo tuilleadh. Thug na h-òrain sealladh luachmhor seachad air an t-seann dùthaich agus, anns an t-seagh seo, air Loch Abar agus air Sliochd Dòmhnallaich na Ceapaich.[11] Chaidh e timcheall leis an inneal-clàraidh aige air tursan anns na 1930an agus 1950an agus is ann às an obair seo a thàinig an leabhar an clò, *Songs Remembered in Exile* (1990) le 60 òran agus ceòl cuide riutha. Rè na h-obrach air cunntasan sluaigh air taobh a' chànain, thachair Iain Latharna ris an fhear fhoghlaimte, Eòin MacFhionghain, no 'Jonathan G Mackinnon' ann am Beurla. 'S e fear naidheachd à Whycocomagh, Ceap Breatainn, a bha ann agus sgrìobhadair comasach fileanta a chruthaich am pàipear naidheachd *Mac Talla*, agus rinn an dithis aca obair ionmholta air sgaoileadh eòlais agus feallsanachd mu na ceanglaichean cultarail eadar Gàidhealtachd Ameireaga a Tuath agus Gàidhealtachd na h-Alba.[12]

11 Faic cuideachd Effie Rankin, *As a' Bhràighe. The Gaelic Songs of Allan the Ridge MacDonald 1794–1868*. Second Edition. Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press 2005.

12 Faic am measg leabhraichean beaga eile Eoin G MacFhionghuin, *Sgeul an Draoidh Eile le Eanruig Van Dyke*. Air a chur amach ann an Albainn le Iain Latharna Caimbeul 1938.

John Lorne Campbell recording Mr J D Mackinnon, Lake Ainslie, Inverness County, Cape Breton, with the Edison Wax Cylinder Recorder in 1937.

Ann an Uidhist, bha Iain Latharna a' faighinn cuideachadh bho Iain Pheadair le gnothach Comann Iasgairean na Mara agus, aig an aon àm, dheasaich iad còmhla leabhar bàrdachd Sheonaidh Chaimbeul à Gleann Dail a Tuath. Bha Iain Pheadair na nàbaidh dha Seonaidh mac Dhòmhnaill 'ic Iain Bhàin agus thug e sìos ceud òran no mu 4,500 sreath de bhàrdachd aig Seonaidh le geàrr-sgrìobhadh agus chuir Iain Latharna *Òrain Ghàidhlig le Seonaidh Caimbeul* ann an clò an 1936. Chuir Iain Latharna a-mach cuideachd *Sia Sgeulachdan* ann an 1939 le stòraidhean luachmhor bho Sheonaidh fhèin agus bho Sheumas Iain Ghunnairigh agus bho Bharrach eile, Murchadh an Eilein. Cha robh dòchas aig a h-uile duine nach rachadh an leabhar beag seo ga reic, agus mar sin, cha do chuir e ann an clò ach da cheud gu leth dhiubh. Bha iad air an reic anns a' bhad. B' e an leabhar sònraichte seo *Sia Sgeulachdan*, a dh'innseadh dha Coimisean Bealoideasa Èireann gun robh a' Ghàidhlig ga bruidhinn fhathast ann an Innse Gall agus gun robh beairteas air leth a thaobh cuspair a' chànain ann an Alba. Cha robh dùil aca ro làimh gun robh a' Ghàidhlig cho làidir anns a' cheàrn seo ach bhrosnaich an leabhar beag iomraiteach iad. Chuireadh Calum

Iain MacIlleathain, a bha ag obair airson a' Choimisein thall a dh'Alba leothasan. Ann an Alba fhèin, cha robh ùidh no fianais oifigeil anns an obair-clàraidh aig an fheadhainn anns na h-Eileanan. Is fìor ainneamh a chuireadh ùidh anns a' bheul-aithris seo aig an àm ud no a rachadh gu dragh ga sgrìobhadh. Chanadh Iain Latharna gun robh e 'glè ghairbh na h-Albannaich a dhùisgeadh ris a' chuspair' agus, air taobh muinntir nan leabhraichean agus nan oilthighean, bha iad '*blatantly uninterested and reprehensibly negligent*' a dh'ionnsaigh cultar prìseil na Roinn Eòrpa.

Thàinig an fheadhainn bho shaoghal nan sgoilearan còmhla an uair sin mar 'bhuidheann-tagraidh' ri bruthadh a chur air na h-oilthighean agus luchd-poileataics mu staid ìosal cultar na Gàidhealtachd. B' iad sin Ruairidh MacThòmais agus an t-Urramach Tòmas MacCalmain còmhla ri Iain Latharna Caimbeul fhèin a bha anns a' bhuidhinn. Bha Iain Latharna air an stiùir ris an tionnsgnadh agus beachd làidir aige mun fheum airson buidheann bheag mar 'ginger-group' (mar a chuir esan rithe) agus brosnachadh fhaighinn bho cheàrnaidhean eile. Bha guth ann mar eisimpleir taobh thall Sruth na Maoile far an robh Coimisean Bealoideasa Èireann a chaidh a stèidheachadh le Riaghaltas na h-Èireann ann an 1935. Chruthaich Iain Latharna agus a sgioba Comann Beul-aithris na h-Albann ann an 1947, no am '*Folklore Institute of Scotland*' a chaidh fon acranaim FIOS agus a rannsaich taic gu obair clàraidh leis na modhan obrach as ùire. Rinn an sgioba seo tòrr obair ann a bhith a' tarraing cànan is cultar nan Gàidheal fainear do Riaghaltas Bhreatainn. Chuir FIOS a-mach sreath de chlàraidhean leis a' chompanaidh '*Linguaphone*' le toradh na h-obrach clàraidh a rinn Iain Latharna ann am Barraigh an 1938, leis na seinneadairean iomraiteach Ruairi Iain Bhàin, Anna Raghnaill Eachainn agus Anna Aonghais Chaluim.[13]

Bho 1938, bha Iain Latharna is a bhean, Mairead Fay Sheathach, a' fuireach ann an Eilean Chanaigh. Cheannaich esan an t-eilean an dèidh brath naidheachd fhaighinn bho Choddy anns a' bhliadhna 'ud agus chum Iain Latharna ri àiteachas fad a bheatha bhon uair sin. Rinn e leasachadh

13 J L Campbell, *Gaelic Folksongs from the Isle of Barra*. London: The Linguaphone Institute [1950].

Seonaidh Campbell, North Glendale, South Uist. Seonaidh was a neighbour of the Macrae sisters with whom Margaret Fay Shaw lived in Uist and his 'Òrain Ghàidhlig' were published by John MacInnes and John Lorne Campbell in 1936.

John Lorne Campbell, Duncan MacDonald, tradition-bearer, South Uist, and Rev Thomas M Murchison, Chairman, Folklore Institute of Scotland.

air an àite le feansaichean agus craobhan. Chuir e uisge agus solas dealain a-stigh dha na taighean. Rinn e sgrùdadh mionaideach air an àrainneachd agus chruthaich e raon ann an Eilean Chanaigh far an tugadh dìon don fhearainn. Rinn e sgrùdadh cuideachd air na bèisteagan, gu h-àraidh air *Macrolepidoptera*, no air na dealanan-dè agus na leòmainn agus ciamar a dhèanadh iad imrich.[14] Chum e air le obair clàraidh agus shàbhail e na bha am beò fhathast air beul-aithris agus ainmean-àite Eilean Chanaigh. Thàinig Calum Iain MacIlleathain a Chanaigh ann an 1947 agus rinn esan

14 J L Campbell, The Macrolepidoptera of the Isle of Canna, *Scottish Naturalist* Volume 66 (1954), 101–121; faic cuideachd John Lorne Campbell, *Canna. The Story of a Hebridean Island*. Fourth Edition (deas. le Hugh Cheape). Edinburgh: Bìrlinn Press 2002.

clàradh de sheanchaidh an Eilein, Aonghas Eachainn Dòmhnallach, a bha air leth eòlach air eachdraidh na sgìre. Tha sgeul air ciamar a bha Iain Latharna a' faighinn sealbh air Eilean Chanaigh agus na duilgheadasan a bha e a' giùlain ann an leabhar ùr le fear-naidheachd, Ray Perman, *The Man Who Gave Away His Island*, a' toirt mìneachadh dhuinn air mar a rinn e dìleab dhen oighreachd agus a cho-chruinneachaidhean prìseil sgoileireil air fad le tiodhlac do dh'Urras Nàiseanta na h-Alba agus do shluagh na h-Alba. Dh'aithnich Iain Latharna gun robh Uidhist cho math ri Barraigh anns na làithean sin a thaobh seanchais agus nan òran. Sgrìobh e ann an 1936: 'Fad na linntean chaidh seachad, bha Uidhist ainmeil air son bàrdachd agus ciùil, agus dh'fhaoidte a ràdh, mas a h-e gu bheil bàrdachd agus ceòl a' dol air dìochainn anns a' Ghàidhealtachd an diugh, is ann an Uidhist as fhaide mhaireas iad fhathast.'[15] Thachair e ri daoine iomraiteach mar Donnchadh MacDhòmhnaill, no Donnchadh MacDhòmhnaill 'ic Dhonnchaidh, à Peighinn an Aoireann an Uidhist a Deas, a bha na fhear-sgeòil cho barraichte, fileanta, aig an robh gach seòrsa sgeòil is naidheachd eadar eachdraidh na Fèinne, eachdraidh Clann Raghnaill 'ic Ailein, Clann 'ic Mhuirich, duain, naidheachdan mu chreideamh, shìthichean agus iomadach rud eile. Mar a thuirt Calum Iain MacIlleathain mu Dhonnchadh: 'Cha b' fhiosrach e am b' fhiach an aithris'.[16] Thàinig Calum Iain fo stiùir Comann Bealoideasa Èireann ann an 1947 ri obair clàraidh anns na h-Eileanan a dhèanamh. Bha Calum Iain agus Iain Latharna gu ìre mhath air an aon ràmh agus chaidh Iain Latharna a thadhal air fear a bha aithnichte mar sheanchaidh, Aonghas MacIll'Fhaolain, a bha a' fuireach an Phrobosd ann an Uidhist a Deas còmhla ri a phiuthar, Mòr Bean Nìll. Dh'fhàs Iain Latharna eòlach air 'Aonghas Beag' agus thòisich e ag obair ris leis mar nach robh ùine gu leòr ris aig Calum Iain. A rèir coltais, bha

15 Iain MacAonghuis, *Òrain Ghàidhlig le Seonaidh Caimbeul*. Air an deasachadh le Iain Latharna Caimbeul. Dùn Phàrlain: I B MacAoidh 1936, xi.

16 Calum I MacGillEathain, Aonghus agus Donnchadh, *Gairm* Àireamh 10 (An Geamhradh 1954), 170–174; faic cuideachd Donnchadh Dòmhnallach, An dòigh air an rachadh tigh dubh a thogail, *Gairm* Àireamh 20 (An Samhradh 1957), 313–317, air a dheasachadh le Fear Chanaigh agus air a chlàradh air 8 An Lùnastal 1951.

an t-uamhas de sheanchas, stòraidhean, naidheachdan agus òrain aige agus sin a fhuair Iain Latharna gu lìonmhor bhuaithe. Rinn e obair clàraidh cuideachd ri Mòr Bean Nill, boireannach a bha cho sgairteil a' bruidhinn na Gàidhlig agus gun ghuth Beurla aice. Eadar Fionn Mac Chumail, 'Na Siantaichean' agus iomadach rud eile bho bheul-aithris aig Aonghas Beag, bha e air an eadar-theangachadh gu Beurla ann an *Stories from South Uist* (1961). Thug Iain Latharna fainear gum biodh e ag innse eachdraidh a bheatha fhèin agus rinn e clàradh dhith agus chuir e an clò i an *Saoghal an Treobhaiche*, leis mar an deachaidh Aonghas Beag air falbh airson obair àiteachais fhaighinn air tìr mòr.

Bha fios aig Iain Latharna gun robh sgoilearan eile ann a bhiodh ag obair gun duais fad bhliadhnaichean ann an saoghal na Gàidhlig agus a bha fhathast airidh air aithneachadh is urram. Ann am beachd Iain Latharna, b' e Mgr Ailean Dòmhnallach a bha na phrìomh duine dhiubh agus chuir e prìomhachas air cliù an t-sagairt fhaighinn air ais. Bha e na shagart ann an Dalabrog an Uidhist a Deas agus Èirisgeigh eadar 1884 agus 1905, ach cha robh cliù Mhgr Ailein cho mòr no cho follaiseach taobh a-muigh na sgìre fhèin. Theireadh e nach robh pears' eaglais riamh ann an Uidhist na b' fheàrr na Mgr Ailean agus, a dh'aindeoin a bhith a' gabhail ri dleasdanasan na sagartachd gu dìcheallach, ghabh e tuilleadh is a' chòir air taobh a' chànain.[17] Rinn Mgr Ailean co-chruinneachadh mòr de bheul-oideas agus de dh'fhaclan, a' sgrìobhadh an fhiosrachaidh anns na leabhraichean-làimh aige a chaidh air chall an dèidh a bhàis ann an 1905. Nach toireadh e misneachadh agus fiosrachadh do dhaoine a bha a' tighinn thuige airson cobhair, mar eisimpleir, do Ada Goodrich Freer a bha a' rannsachadh

17 Faic mar a sgrìobh Mgr Ailean anns a' Ghàidhlig ann an 'Leabhar-latha Mhgr Ailein Dòmhnallaich', *Gairm* Àireamh 1 (An Geamhradh 1952), 1: 51–55; 2: 71–75; 3: 65–70; 4: 31–34; Àireamh 2 (Am Foghar 1953), 5: 37–42; faic cuideachd John Lorne Campbell, *Fr Allan McDonald of Eriskay, 1859–1905. Priest, Poet and Folklorist*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd 1954; John Lorne Campbell, *Bàrdachd Mhgr Ailein. The Gaelic Poems of Fr Allan McDonald of Eriskay (1859–1905)*. Edinburgh: T & A Constable 1965; Ronald Black editor, *Eilean na h-Òige. The Poems of Fr Allan McDonald*. Glasgow: Mungo Books 2002.

airson leabhar, '*The Outer Isles*'. Dh'fhoillsich Iain Latharna gun do rinn Goodrich Freer 'meirle sgrìobhaidh' agus gun d'fhuair i am fiosrachadh bho Shagart Èirisgeigh nach d'fhuair creideas aig an àm 'ud.[18] Rinn Iain Latharna *Gaelic Words and Expressions from South Uist and Eriskay* dhe na faclan doirbh no 'cruaidh-fhaclan' a chruinnich Mgr Ailean bho bhile an t-sluaigh agus mìneachadh a chur orra bhuapa.

Chùm Iain Latharna air ri obair sgoilearachd na Gàidhlig fad a bheatha bhuan agus dh'eug e anns an Eadailt air an 25mh den Ghiblean 1996. Chùm e air leis an obair rannsachaidh agus obair sgrìobhaidh aige agus nochd sreath leantainneach de dh'aistean agus de leabhraichean clò-bhuailte a tha a' toirt taic agus buannachd fhathast do sgoilearan an latha an-diugh ann an raon na Ceiltis is na Gàidhlig. Fhuair e aithneachadh airson toradh na h-obrach aige, bho Oilthigh Naoimh Francis Xavier ann an Albainn Nuadh (Hon LLD, 1953), Oilthigh Ghlaschu (Hon DLitt, 1965) agus bho Bhaile nan Damh mar a dh'fhoillsich iad *Hebridean Folksongs* (DLitt, 1965). Dh'aithnich Iain Latharna Caimbeul bho thùs dè cho beartach 's a bha cànan agus dualchas nan Gàidheal leis mar a bha e a' tarraing air tobar an fhiosrachaidh am measg nan daoine. Chuireadh e air adhart cultar nan Gàidheal fad a bheatha agus bheireadh e taic is misneachadh do sgoilear sam bith. Chuir e cudthrom anns na sgrìobhainnean aige fhèin air luchd labhairt na Gàidhlig an àite nan leabhraichean gràmair – 's i a' Ghàidhlig mar chànan làitheil nan daoine as luachmhoire na cànan nan leabhraichean sgoileireil.

18 J L Campbell, The Late Fr Allan McDonald, Miss Goodrich Freer and Hebridean Folklore, *Scottish Studies* 2 (1958), 175–188.

Summary

John Lorne Campbell (1906–1996) was one of the foremost Gaelic scholars of the twentieth century. He was the husband of Margaret Fay Shaw (1903–2004), the American folklorist and musician whom he married in 1935, forming a partnership in words and music whose legacy endures. The 'Canna Man' – *Fear Chanaigh* – was the sobriquet adopted from his move to ownership of the Island of Canna in 1938, a subtle indicator of status recalling a learned and supportive role of the tacksman class in history. He sustained a long career of research and fieldwork, pioneering the collection of Gaelic oral tradition using mechanical recorders. He began in 1937 with an Edison clockwork wax-cylinder recorder but immediately upgraded to the Presto Disc and subsequently Webster Wire Recorder, continuing through his career to subscribe to changing technology. With a quiet but steely determination and working outside the institutional framework of the universities, he formed strong views on the need for intellectual independence and was critical of the universities' neglect of the oral traditions of the British Isles. From his own experience in the field and study of the experience of other countries, principally with the example of the Irish Folklore Commission, he campaigned with growing support for the creation of what emerged as the School of Scottish Studies in the University of Edinburgh in 1951.

An interest in the Gaelic language began in his early years in Argyll and was fired while at Oxford by Professor John Fraser. His first book was produced under Fraser's guidance, with scrupulous editing and scholarship and a robust setting-straight of the record for Highland and Hebridean history. His enlistment of the Gaelic voice as primary source included the Jacobite poet, Alexander MacDonald, whose learned language he continued to study throughout his life. He would recall that his arrival in Barra on 4 August 1933 was the turning point in his life at which he began the recording of the everyday language of a Hebridean community. In this self-appointed task, he was working from within the tradition with a sound knowledge of the language, its linguistic background and its cultural milieu. With his training in agriculture and a deeper understanding of the

difficult economic, cultural and linguistic circumstances of the time, he proposed with extraordinary foresight the establishment of a development agency for the Highlands and Islands and the long-term protection of their local resources such as fisheries.

His publication of the Gaelic record was designed to arouse awareness of its extraordinary richness and to set new editorial standards, for example, in the three volumes of *Hebridean Folksongs* (1969–1981) and his 'Six Stories' or *Sia Sgeulachdan* (1939) from reciters in South Uist and Barra. This raised the interest of the Irish Folklore Commission to the strength of the Gaelic oral tradition of the Hebrides and prompted the Commission to send Calum MacLean to the Scottish Gaidhealtachd. He had looked beyond this Gaelic community to the diaspora. In 1932 he visited Nova Scotia and the descendants of emigrants of 1790–1835, to discover the extent to which they had sustained their culture. While there, he conducted a census of the language. In 1937 he returned to record a collection of songs in Cape Breton and Antigonish County which were published in *Songs Remembered in Exile*, showing that what had been lost from the song tradition of the Highland and Hebrides formed part of a living repertory in the New World. His continuing fieldwork included the recording of stories from the wide repertoire of Angus MacLellan of South Uist and the publication of the storyteller's life history. This was matched by major studies of earlier remarkable collectors from the Celticist, Edward Lhuyd (1660–1709), to Fr Allan McDonald of Eriskay (1859–1905) and a steady flow of scholarly articles across disciplines in the humanities and sciences. His collections of *Macrolepidoptera Cannae* and field records of scientific observation add specialist dimensions to his farming operations, also scientifically observed and recorded.

His island property, successfully farmed in the interests of conservation, together with extensive collections of field recordings, writings and correspondence were donated to the National Trust for Scotland in 1981 to form a resource in the public domain for the continuing study of the language, culture and environment of the Highlands and Islands. His sound recordings now form the foundation of the *Tobar an Dualchais / Kist o Riches* digital resource.

Gaelic Song

Morag MacLeod

Morag MacLeod was born and brought up in Scalpay, Harris. When it came to secondary education, its place in Inverness-shire (Stornoway was in Ross-shire) meant that the choices were Tarbert, Harris, for three years and then Portree or Inverness, or the latter two for six years. Morag went to Inverness Royal Academy, and later to the University of Edinburgh where she graduated with an ordinary MA. She spent a year doing teacher-training at Jordanhill College of Education in Glasgow – the only college which dealt with Gaelic teaching. On completion of that course, however, she joined the staff of the School of Scottish Studies as a music transcriber. She regarded it as a great privilege to be able to visit many islands to record tradition-bearers in connection with that job. When the School took on a teaching role in the early 1970s, Morag took part as a lecturer on Gaelic Song, continuing as such when the department expanded into presenting for a full-time Honours degree, called Scottish Ethnology.

Morag retired in 2001, but continues to assist with Gaelic matters for the School's publications, Tocher *and the* Scottish Tradition *series of cassettes and CDs, much curtailed as those are because of the teaching commitments. She lives in Scalpay.*

I have given talks with this title so often that I'm finding it difficult to ring the changes for people who have heard most of it before. The reason that we do find ourselves talking for half-an-hour on Gaelic Song is probably down to the School of Scottish Studies. First there was the feeling that the songs should be collected, then, that they should be studied, and then that lectures should be given about them, as against just singing them and listening to them. I was very fortunate in being employed by the School of Scottish Studies when I was. Today there would be a queue of qualified academics applying for the lowly job of music transcriber, but in 1964 the few Gaelic speakers who had qualifications in music were not interested in Gaelic songs, or in any music except classical music by known composers. But the language

is in a unique position in that the geographical, linguistic and cultural parameters of Gaelic Song are definable. Because of the comparative isolation of those who speak the language, Gaelic songs have not been so influenced by external factors, and styles and themes have remained the same for centuries.

The incidence of songs which probably originated in Ireland confirms our awareness of close communication between the two cultures. This is also obvious in the common themes and details of the tales in each place, and some songs contain elements of those tales. It is wonderful that there are examples recorded in the School of Scottish Studies, going back possibly to the 10th century, of the exploits of Fionn MacColla and his warriors, Cuchullainn and his warriors, Diarmaid, and so on, incorporating Scandinavian tales as well. The patently Irish example I'm going to play for you is not a Fenian or Ossianic ballad. A lot has been written about it, as shown in the notes to versions of the song in *Hebridean Folksongs.*[1] An exchange between two characters in Shakespeare's *Henry V* contains a reference to *Calen o custure me* and it is probable that a song with a similar title was first published in 1584. As a waulking song, the refrain varies from *Chailin òg a stiùir thu mise* (young girl, will you guide me?), to *Chailin òg an stiùirimiche* (young daughter of the steersman). It has generally been concluded that it has developed from *Cailin o Chois t-Siùire mé,* (I am a young girl from the banks of the river Suir). The river Suir is in Munster. We cannot tell where the version sung in South Uist and Barra came from, as there are a few published, but it may well have come through oral transmission from the 16th century song quoted in Shakespeare. This is Mary Morrison from Barra with a group singing *Chailin Oig a Stiùir thu mise.*[2]

1 Campbell, J. L. and Collinson, F. *Hebridean Folksongs*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1969–81), Vol 2, pp. 43–51. Notes, pp. 200–209.

2 With the facilities presented by *Tobar an Dualchais* you may hear several versions of the song by going to that website. For this song look for *Cailin òig an stiùirimiche*, SA1956.072, sung by Mary Morrison, Barra.

Chailin òig a stiùir thu mise?

Chailin òig an stiùir thu mise? (2) Cailin mise, buachaill' thusa, Chailin òg a hiùraibh oho
Cailin mise, buachaill' thusa, Chailin òg an stiùir thu mise?
Cailin a' ghaoith mhòir 's a' ghailleann mi, Chailin òig an stiùir thu mise?
Cailin a' ghaoith mhòir 's a' ghailleann mi, Chailin òig a hiùraibh oho
Cailin a thobhar 's da thalamh mi
Cailin a thaomadh na feannaig mi
Cailin òig an stiùir thu mise? (2)
B'fheàirrde banchag buachaill aice
Ged nach dean e ach falbh reimhpe
Thèid e mach san oidhche fhrasaich
Cumaidh e na laoigh am fasgadh
Càiridh e suanach fo mhartaibh
Thàinig ise 'n t-ollbhean dhàna
Dhìrich i staighir a b'àirde
Sheall i steach air uinneag clàraidh
'Fhir tha staigh, na de mar tha thu?'
'Tha mise bochd truagh mar 's àbhaist
Olc le m'charaid 's math le m'nàmhaid.'
Thàinig ise 'n t-ollbhean dhàna…

Young girl, will you guide me? (2)
I a girl, you a young boy, Young girl, a hiuraibh oho
I a girl, you a young boy, Young girl, will you guide me?
Young girl in high wind and storm I, Young girl, will you guide me?
Young girl in high wind and storm I, Young girl, a hiuraibh oho
I am a young girl of manure and earth (?)
I am a young girl to dig the lazybed.[3]

A dairymaid is the better of a young boy, if only to precede her. He will go out on a wet night; he'll keep the calves in shelter; he'll place a fleece under cattle.

3 My translation. I regret that such a literal translation does poor justice to the original text.

> She came, the bold hussy. She climbed the highest stair. She looked in on a partition window.
> 'You inside, how are you?'
> 'I am poorly and sick, as always. Bad (news) for my friend, good (news) for my enemy.'
> She came, the bold hussy…

Several older songs like that, such as Fenian, Ossianic or Heroic ballads, have been kept in memory because of their use as waulking songs. It is more difficult to find songs with a text relating to historical matters in Lewis and Harris than it is in South Uist and Barra, and when they do occur, it is not unusual to find local texts added. This example is from Christina Shaw from Harris, and however old the song may be, the text is mainly of local provenance.

Tha fadachd orm fhìn i rì

Sèist:
Tha fadachd orm fhìn i rì 's mi ri dol a ghluasad, tha fadachd orm fhìn i rì

Fadachd air muin fadachd orm, i rì gur fhad on uair sin
Chuir iad chon na h-àiridh mi nuair thug mo ghràdh an cuan dhi
Chuir iad mi nam ònar gu mòinteach na Luachrach
'S diombach mi dha d'mhàthair a leig gu sàl cho luath thu
Colach cùl mo leannain-sa ri Ailig Dhomhaill 'ic Ruairi
Colach cùl mo ghràidh-sa ri faoileig bhàin nan cuantan
Nuair thig do litir dhachaigh bidh do bheannachd air a h-uachdar.[4]

> *Refrain:*
> I am longing, oh dear! as I move to go away, I am longing, oh dear!
> Longing upon longing, oh dear! it's been a long time.
> They sent me to the shieling when my sweetheart went to sea.
> They sent me on my own to the moor of Luachair.
> I resent your mother, who let you go to sea so early.

4 To be heard on *Orain*, published by Acair, Stornoway, 1980. See also SA1973.44, 48 and 50.

> The back of my sweetheart's head is like Alick, son of Donald, son of Roderick.
> The back of my sweetheart's head is like the white gull on the ocean.
> When your letter comes home, your blessing will be clear on it.

It was in the School of Scottish Studies that I learned about different verse metres and about the melodies attached to them. My colleague, Thorkild Knudsen asked me to ferret out songs in 'syllabic metre'. It took me a long time to recognise it, and I know I made many mistakes, but in the end it is quite simple. It is like blank verse. As they are usually written in stanzas of 8 lines, they are referred to as '8-line syllabic verse' and its distinguishing factor is the number of syllables per line, rather than the number of stresses. This means that the number of stresses can be irregular, so that it is difficult to attach conventional time signatures to the melody when attempting to write it. In syllabic metre, bar lines and time signatures are almost impossible to place and, of course, vary greatly from verse to verse. Over the years, however, the tunes used for this metre have become standardised as close variants, with a lament by Julia Macdonell of Keppoch for Alasdair of Glengarry regarded as the prototype. The poet Duncan Ban Macintyre composed two songs on the Battle of Falkirk (1746), both sung to this tune, so that the texts often get confused. Another example is by Alasdair Mackinnon from Morar on the Battle of Holland (1799).

Blàr na h-Eaglaise Brice

Ged tha mise seo nam chrùban ann an seann taigh ualaidh aognaidh
Bha mi roimhe mar ri cuideachd, ged a thuit dhaibh mo chur bhuapa
'S tric mi 'g amharc ris an aonach faic mi t-aogasg Iain 'ic Ruairi
Is na faicinn thu ri tighinn, dh'èireadh mo chridhe fo smuaintean.

Dh'èireadh m'inntinn-sa fo smalan a bhith mar riut, Iain 'ic Ruairi,
Dh'innsinn dhut na bhiodh air m' aire 's bhithinn farraid na bhiodh uam dheth
'N latha sin thug iad na buillean, 's mise chunnaic bhith gam bualadh
Chaidh teicheadh air taobh Righ Deòrsa, 's ann oirnn thàinig am fuathas.

’S e sgeul an uamhais ri innse, gun do theich an righ ’s a mhuinntir,
Ghabh iad eagal ro na buillean nuair a chunnaic iad am Prionnsa
Cha d’dh’fhan duine dhiu ri chèile eadar Dun-Eideann is Struighlea
’S iomadh bail’ anns a robh pàirt dhiu gabhail tàmh air teachd na h-oidhche.[5]

Although I am crouching here in an old gloomy, lonely house,
I was erstwhile with a party, though they happened to dismiss me;
oft do I scan the moor if, haply I may see your form, John, son of Roderick;
and if I saw your form approaching, my heart would rise out of depression.

My heart would rise from melancholy were I with you, John, son of Roderick;
I would tell you all I had in mind and ask for all the news I lacked.
On that day they struck the blows, I saw them being given;
King George’s side was put to flight, we were terror-stricken.

It was a tale of terror to relate how the king and his people fled;
they were frightened of the blows as soon as they observed the Prince;
none of them waited for the others between Edinburgh and Stirling;
there’s many a town where some of them rested when the night came.

Blàr na h-Olaind

’S air mìos dheireannach an fhoghair, ’n dàrna latha ’s math mo chuimhne
Ghluais na Breatannaich air n-aghaidh a thoirt *advance* air na naimhdean
Thug Abercrombie taobh na mara dhiu le’n canain ’s àird a chluinnte
’S bha ’m *brigade* air gairm gu daingeann cumail aingil ris na Frangaich.

5 Sung by Donald Joseph Mackinnon, Barra. Duncan Ban Macintyre made two songs on this subject, in the same metre, and they are often confused. Mackinnon’s text is entirely from *Another Song on the Battle of Falkirk*. For both texts see *Orain Dhonnchaidh Bhàin, (Songs of Duncan Ban Macintyre)*, ed. Angus MacLeod, Edinburgh 1978. See also SA 1956.072 and other examples in *Tobar an Dualchais*. Translation based on MacLeod.

Bha na Frangaich math ri teine gus an teannar goirid bhuapa
Gur ann mar sin a sgrios iad sinne an-dèis mionaidean na h-uarach;
Bha iad san uair laoich gun tioma dhol an àite buille bhualadh,
'S bha roinn nan stàilinne biorach sàthadh guineideach mu'n tuairmse.

Mar thionndadh boise shàtht' an loibhne leis na saighdearan nach tillte
Eòin ghuinich air bheag coibhneis, cuileinean nach loinn le mìmhodh
Thàinig iad mar dhearrsadh boillsgeil, mar dhealanach air an tig an dìleann
'S thug iad iomain air na naimhdean neul na fala bhrìgh nam pìcean.

The last month of Autumn, the second day, I remember well,
the British moved forward to make an advance on the enemy.
Abercrombie took the seaward side of them with loud cannons, and
the brigade was encouraged to keep close fire on the French.

The French were good marksmen until we were close to them. That was how they destroyed us after a few minutes. But in time, dauntless warriors got close enough to strike, and the points of sharp steel pierced woundingly in their direction.

In a twinkling the line was pierced by the soldiers who could not be repelled – fierce birds with little mercy, mischievous pups which were not disciplined. They came like a bright shining, like lightning with a deluge, and they attacked the enemy, a cloud of blood brought out by the pikes.[6]

Other types of syllabic verse are still to be found in oral tradition, in examples of ballads variously referred to as Fenian, Ossianic, or, as a more general term, Heroic.

I had difficulty in distinguishing a song in '8-line syllabic metre' from one like the next three examples. Syllabic verse is sung in speech rhythm,

6 Sung by Mrs Archie MacDonald, South Uist, on SA1956.27. Full text in John MacKenzie (ed.) *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd Gaelach (The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry)*, Edinburgh, 1882, p. 344. It is included in Ronald Black (ed.) *An Lasair, Anthology of 18th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse*, Birlinn, Edinburgh, 2001, pp. 354–361. My translation is based on his Notes, pp.521–525.

and many other categories of song sound as if they are in the rhythm of speech as well, but in the following examples the overall rhythm is quite regular, and rhyme is much more important.

Airigh luachrach Uige

'S fhir a shiùibhleas gu mo dhùthaich, 's ann à Uige dh'fhalbh mi
Thoir beannachd dùbailt' null gan ionnsaigh chosgas crùn de dh'airgead
A dh'ionnsaigh Sheoc a tha 's an Uige, ceann-cunntaidh mo sheanchais,
Is tha mi 'n dùil gu faic mi thu man tig an ùir air Armchal

Bu mhath an uairsin a bhith shuas aig àirigh luachrach Uige
Far 'm biodh na h-uain 's na caoraich bhuaidheach ruith mun cuairt gu siùbhlach
Mi fhìn 's mo chruinneag air mo ghualainn, deamhais chruadhach dùint' aic
Gach fear is tè dhiu ruith man cuairt – bidh Dòmhnall Ruadh le a chù ann.

B'e siud an gleann bu bhòidhche sealladh anns a' mhadainn cheòthach
Le caoraich gheala dhubha 's ghlasa, cuid dhiu tarraing brògach
Bhiodh làir an t-searraich 'n cois gach bealaich, muir ri srannadh bhogh'nnan
'S a dh'aindeoin gaillinn na fuachd Earraich chan iarr mart ann cròdhadh.

Nuair thig an Geamhradh 's àm nam bainnsean gheibh sinn dràm den Tòiseachd
Bidh Nollaig chridheil aig clann-nighean 's aig na gillean òga
Bidh mnathan fhèin a' ruith 's a' leum dhiu, 's cuid dhiu 'g eubhach òran,
Srann aig bodaich ann am fodar 's sogan orr' a' stòiridh.

> You who visits my homeland, I came from Uig. Carry a double blessing across to them which may cost a silver crown, to Jock, who is in the Uig, the reason for my story – and I expect to see you before the earth covers Armchal.
>
> It would be good then to be up on the reedy shieling of Uig, where lambs and beautiful sheep run around with speed, me with my sweetheart holding closed steel shears, at my shoulder; all the men and women running around; red-haired Donald will be there with his dog.

> That glen had a most beautiful view on a misty morning with white, black and grey sheep, some of them leading young ones; there would be a mare's foal in every pass, the sea roaring against rocks; and in spite of storm or the cold of Spring, cattle did not need a fold there.
>
> When Winter comes and weddings, we'll get a dram of whisky (from Ferintosh); girls and young lads will have a merry Christmas; even women will be cavorting, some of them bellowing songs, a murmur coming from the old men as they enjoy telling stories.[7]

The only song I had ever heard before working in the School in what is often called strophic metre was a love song from the 19th century. Each verse has three lines, each with two stresses in the first two lines, and three in the third. There is assonance at the ends of the first two lines with a word in the middle of the third, and assonance between the end syllables of each verse. *Gu bheil mulad air m'inntinn / on là thàinig mi 'n tìr seo / far nach fhaic mo nìghneag dhonn òg*. (My mind is sad since coming to this place where I don't see my dear young girl). Each verse ends with an ò syllable. Two great poets of the 17th century, Mary MacLeod and John MacDonald, developed this metre to its highest point. The type is at the opposite end of the spectrum from syllabic verse, as the rhythm dictates the choice of words and is entirely regular. A distinguishing feature of Mary MacLeod's poetry is that she sometimes used different lengths of verse. The late Rev William Matheson made a special study of such songs and he maintained that the metre should be called **Iorram**, and here is an example sung by him of one of the more complicated sets of verses in a song by Mary MacLeod[8].

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7 Sung by Murdo Campbell, Greep, Skye, on SA1984.001 Text with melody in Martin, Christine (ed.) *Orain an Eilein (Gaelic Songs of Skye)*, Taigh na Teud, Skye, 2001, p. 53.

8 Mary MacLeod (her dates are uncertain, but usually placed at 1615 to 1707) was unofficially the poet of the MacLeods of Harris and Dunvegan. Texts of her songs may be found in Watson J.C. (ed.) *Gaelic Songs of Mary MacLeod*, 1934. Some also appear in anthologies such as MacKenzie, *Sàr Obair nam Bàrd* and Watson, W. J. *Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig*. This recording is from *Gaelic Bards and Minstrels*, a double CD by William Matheson from the School of Scottish Studies Scottish Tradition series produced by Greentrax Recordings, Cockenzie. CTRAX 9016D.

An naidheachd seo 'n dè

An naidheachd seo 'n dè;
aighearach e;
moladh dhan lèigh
thug malairt dam chèill
nis teannaidh mi fhèin ri crònan.

Beannachd dhan bheul
a dh'aithris an sgeul
dh'fhàg fallain mo chrè;
cha ghearain mi fhèin
na chailleadh 's na dh'eug
's mo leanabh nan dèidh còmhshlan.

Nam biodh agamsa fìon
gum b'ait leam a dhìol
air slàinte do thighinn
gu d'chàirdean 's gu d'thìr;
mhic àrmainn mo ghaoil,
b'e m'àrdan 's mo phrìs
àlach mo rìgh thògbhail.

Tha mo dhùil-s' ann an Dia
gur mùirneach do thriall
gu dùn ud nan cliar
far 'm bu dùthchas do m'thriath
bhith gu fiùghantach fial foirmeil.

> (5 lines) This message of yesterday, it is joyous; praised be the healer who has turned my spirit towards health. Now I will begin a croon.
>
> (6 lines) Blessed be the mouth that told the tale that has made my body sound; those that are lost, those that are dead I will not lament, for my child is left alive and well.

> (7 lines) Had I wine, I would deem it a joy to drink it to the toast of your return to your friends and your own land, son of the warrior of my love; my pride and prize it would be to celebrate my king's brood.
>
> (5 lines) My hope is in God for a happy journey for you to yonder fortress of the poet bands, where my lord's custom was to be generous, free-handed and stately.

Iorram has gone out of fashion, although the Uist poet, Donald John MacDonald (1919–1986) has produced a few examples, to be found in the book of his poems edited by Bill Innes.[9]

When it comes to Minstrels, we should change tack and consider poetic themes rather than metres or verse forms. There were three categories of poet within the households of the Gaelic aristocracy, the very highly trained *fili*, the *bard* and the *minstrel.* The songs we listened to in syllabic verse were by poets who imitated the style of the *fili* without following the strict rules that their predecessors had to learn. Strophic verse or *Iorram* was the prerogative of the *bard.* Minstrels were the harper class, and they did not confine themselves to the chief's house. They learned musical skills from teachers throughout the British Isles and Europe, exchanging melodies, especially with their Irish counterparts. The harper poets who still enjoyed the patronage of their chiefs were obliged to compose eulogies and elegies, but the melodies they used became the vehicle for almost all categories of poetry. Typical of this genre of international melody are stanzas of four long phrases with, often, at least one of those repeated. The Reedy Shieling of Uig, above, is a good example.

Here are two more examples, both with the same tune**,** a song of unrequited love, from the island of Tiree, and a song of regret for leaving his native place by Donald MacDonald from Bornish in South Uist.

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9 Innes, Bill (ed.) *Chì mi. The Gaelic Poetry of Donald John MacDonald*, Birlinn, Edinburgh 1998.

Air moch Diluain

O, moch Diluain gura trom mo smuaintean 's mi fàgail Chluaidh 's ri cur suas nan seòl,
'S ann man a' ghruagaich a rinn mo bhuaireadh dh'fhàg m'inntinn luaineach le cainnt a beòil
Do ghaol a shàraich 's a rinn mo chràdhlot mar shaighdean cràidhteach an-sàs am fheòil
Gach là is oidhche gur tu mo chuibhreann, mo reul-iùil thu, mo chliù 's mo cheòl.

Dimàirt a fhuair sinn gu brollach cuain i an t-eithear uallaich bu chruaidhe bòrd,
Bu trom an iarmailt le frasan fiadhaich 's bha colas ciarganach air na neòil
Bha thusa nuairsin nad chadal suaimhneach gun ghuth, a luaidh, gu robh mi gun dòigh
'S fear eil' air uairibh a' deanamh suas riut air son an tuaileis a thog iad oirnn.

'S a' mheadhan oidhche ga b'ann gha stiùireadh gur tric mi cuimhneachadh cainnt do bheòil
Mo shùil sa chombaist gha cumail dìreach 's an fhairrge mhìllteach a' mir ri stròin;
A sgiathan sgaoilte ri cruas na gaoithe is feadan caoin aice air na ròip
A gillean aotrom cur rithe h-aodaich 's an sneachd na chaoran air caol nan dòrn.

Oh, my thoughts are sad, early on a Monday morning, setting sail to leave the Clyde. It is about the girl who allured me with her words. Your love has exhausted me, and wounded me sorely, as if sharp arrows were embedded in my flesh; days and nights you are my portion, my guiding star, my good name and my music.

On a Tuesday we got her to sea, the proud ship of hard boards. The sky was heavy, with wild showers, and the clouds looked threatening. You were then sleeping peacefully, with no inkling that I was unhappy, with another man courting you because of the slander they brought against us.

At midnight at the helm, I often think of your conversation, my eye on the compass, keeping her steady, with the destructive sea playing at her bows; her wings spread against the strength of the wind, with a playful whistling in the ropes, her lightsome lads adding sail with the snow in lumps on their wrists.[10]

Fàgail Bhòrnais

Gur mi bha gòrrach a' fàgail Bhòrnais, an t-àite 's bòidhche tha 'n-diugh fon ghrèin,
Gun gheug a fhraoch ann no clach ri fhaotainn, ach talamh maol 's e gu leathan rèidh,
A' chruit as brèagh' air 'n do dhealraich grian, agus Loch an Iasgair 's e shìos fo ceann
Am breac cho lìonmhor a' dol san lìon agam 's na h-eòin ag iathadh mun chladach thall.

Gur ann DiDòmhnaich a dh'fhàg mi Bòrnais, bha m'inntinn brònach 's mi sileadh dheur,
Mi fhìn 's mo phàistean cur cùl ri m'fhàrdraich far'm faighinn blàths agus cadal rèidh,
Ach tha mi 'n dràst' ann am meadhan fàsaich, tha m'inntinn cràidhteach 's cha dèan e feum
Nach bochd an saoghal mar nì e caochladh; tha mis' am aonar an-seo leam fhèin.

Gur tric mi smaoineachadh air na caoraich a th'air na munaidhean a dh'fhàg mi thall,
Air Cnoc na Fèille bidh iad nan treudan 's an cìobair gleusta gan cumail thall,
Iad fhèin 's na h-ògain dol suas gu Bòrnais, b'e 'n sealladh bòidheach e anns an àm;
An àm an rùsgaidh bidh 'n airm ga tionndadh, 's bidh chlòimh na dùin air gach taobh dan fhang.

10 Sung by Angus Campbell, Ness, Lewis, SA1967.086. By John Maclean, Tiree, text to be found in Cameron, Hector (ed.) *Na Bàird Thirisdeach, (Tiree bards)* pp. 278–281, Tiree, 1932. My translation.

> How foolish I was leaving Bornish, today the most beautiful place in the whole world. It has no heather or stones, just bare earth, broad and smooth. The loveliest croft on which sun ever shone, with the Fisherman's Loch down at its edge; salmon goes into my net, and birds fly along at the shore.
>
> It was on a Sunday that I left Bornish, my mind was low as I shed tears; my children and I turning our backs on our homes where I could get warmth and restful sleep. But I am now in the middle of a desert, my mind is sore, but it is no use. What an awful world, how it changes. I am here all alone.
>
> I often think of the sheep on the hills I left over there. They'll be in flocks on the Hill of the Fair, the skilled shepherd keeping them there, they and the young ones going up to Bornish, what a bonny sight it was at the time; at shearing time there'll be armies of them turning it, and the wool in mounds on either side of the fank.[11]

Some tunes, known to Scots and English texts, are used again and again for Gaelic songs, for example, Woo'd an Married an A', The Flowers of Edinburgh, Loch Lomond, A Man' s a Man For A' That, and so on.

The themes of songs in Gaelic are no different from any other cultural area – love, lament, praise, satires against toothache, rats, noisy cockerels, witty recitals of unusual happenings, such as when electricity and public water supplies were introduced. *Highland Songs of the Forty-five* contains 32 songs about that uprising in the 18th century, and I believe the number of songs in Gaelic about different wars is noteworthy. There is an abundance of songs of homesickness, probably more than in any other culture due, of course, to the number of incidences of having to leave home, to live elsewhere, to take on work as a sailor, or in the shipyards in Glasgow, or even at the fishing in Shetland.

11 Sung by Peggy MacDonald, South Uist. (Private recording by Ishabel T. Macdonald). Auth. Donald MacDonald (Dòmhnall Ruadh), Bornish. Listen also to Mary MacDonald SA1951.04, recorded by Dr John Lorne Campbell.

The performers on a commercial CD called 'In the footsteps of the Bards' are a group of young singers from South Uist. They sing a song by Marion Maclellan about going to the fishing in Shetland, telling of the hiring of the boat in Loch Carnan in Uist, the man who helped them and the curer who was good to them. But now she would like to go back to Oban. In the last verse she says, 'I'll never again go fishing in Shetland. This year will be enough for me. There are so many Irish folk, and the girls are so pretty, just ready for proposals of marriage.' Is she saying, 'there's too much competition here for me'?

Horò tha mi smaointinn

Sèist:
Ho ró tha mi smaointinn air tarraing dhachaigh daonnan
Gu dùthaich mo ghaoil agus m'eòlais
Gu monadh nan caoiltean far a bheil mo dhaoine
Far a robh mi aotrom is gòrrach.

'S ann an Loch a' Chàrnain a dh'fharadh dhuinn am bàta
'S bha feum gu robh Adam nar còmhdhail,
Am fear ann bha cho fìnealt 's e math dha a chuid nìghneag,
'S thug e dhuinn ar dìnneir 's an òst-thaigh.

'S ann againn a bha 'n ciùrair a thàinig gar dùthaich
Thug e meas is cliù anns gach dòigh dhuinn
Thug e sinn thar chuantan, air bhàrr nan tonnan uaine;
Cha d'chuir e sgilinn ruadh as ar pòcaid.

'S mise tha gu cianail 's an rubha seo am bliadhna,
Far nach eil an t-iasgach gam chòrdadh;
Nam faighinn mar bu mhiann leam dheanainn falbh Diciadaoin
Air stiomair a' Chrianain dhan Òban.

'S cha teid mi gu sìorraidh a Shealtainn a dh'iasgach
Ach foghnaidh a' bhliadhna seo dhòmhsa,
Na h-Eireannaich cho lìonmhor 's na caileagan cho brèagha,
'S gun dad ann ach gan iarraidh gu pòsadh.[12]

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12 Sung by Mary MacMillan, South Uist, on CD, *An Lorg nam Bàrd (In the Footsteps of the Bards)*, a collection of songs from Uist. Translation based on that in the CD booklet.

> Horo, I am always thinking of making for home, to the land I loved and knew, to the wooded moorland where my people are, where I was light-hearted and carefree.
>
> It was in Loch Carnan that the boat was hired for us, and it was as well that Adam was with us, he who was so genteel and kind to his girls, and he gave us our dinner in the inn.
>
> We had a curer who came to our land; he gave us esteem and good repute in every way. He took us over oceans on the crest of the green billows, and it didn't cost us a penny.
>
> I am so desolate in this headland this year, where I am not enjoying the fishing, and if I had my wish I'd set off on Wednesday on the steamer from Crinan to Oban.
>
> I'll never again go fishing in Shetland. This year will be enough for me. The Irish are so numerous and the girls so beautiful, and all that is needed is to propose to them.

Waulking songs are unique to Gaelic, and there are hundreds of them. I have heard it said that they were composed prior to the 17th century, but words have been added while the work was going on. Songs with – I think – an instrumental origin were also composed spontaneously. We call them *puirt à beul,* literally tunes out of the mouth, and I would venture to say that this is certainly a genre that is at least at its best in Gaelic, if not quite unique. Some are obviously intended for dandling children, while others have really intriguing texts, and it would be good to know the story behind them. This one is just a song praising a young girl.

Hó ró m'ulaidh thu

Sèist:
Hó ró m'ulaidh thu, m'ulaidh m'aighear air an nighinn
Hó ró m'ulaidh thu 's tu nighean lurach bhòidhich

Dheannainn fhìn gurraban gun aon duine cuide rium,
Chan iarrainn a chuideachd ach an nighean lurach còmhla rium.

M'ulaidh thu, m'aighear thu, nighean an droch athar thu,
'S ged tha e na fhear-taighe dhomh, cha dèan e mathas dhòmh-sa.

Refrain:
Horo my darling, my darling, my joy the girl; horo my darling, you are a lovable, beautiful girl.

I would crouch, with no partner, I'd wish for no company but the lovable girl along with me.
My darling, my joy, daughter of the bad father, and although he is the head of my house, little good is he to me.[13]

A dheó aili aili idil

'S a dheó aili aili idil, chaidh an dileag ud am cheann
O aili é aili ó aili chaidh i ann (2)

Tacan beag air feadh nan nighean 's air a' mhionaid bidh mi falbh'
O aili é aili ó aili bidh mi falbh (2)

'S a dheó aili aili idil, chaidh an dileag ud am cheann
O aili é aili ó aili chaidh i ann

Gheibh sibh mise na mo chadal, gheibh sibh mise na mo shuain
O aili é aili ó aili na mo shuain (2)

'S a dheó aili aili idil, chaidh an dileag ud am cheann
O aili é aili ó aili chaidh i ann.

And oh alli alli idil, that droppie went to my head, Oh alli, ae alli, it went there indeed. (2)

A short trip amongst the girls, and I'll be going in a minute, oh alli, ae alli oh alli I'll be going. (2)

And oh alli alli idil, that droppie went to my head, Oh alli, ae alli, it went there indeed. You'll find me asleep, you'll find me fast asleep, oh alli ae alli oh alli, fast asleep (2)

13 Sung by Mrs Kate MacDonald, South Uist. See *Tobar an Dualchais*: SA1956.024.

> And oh alli alli idil, that droppie went to my head, Oh alli, ae alli, it went there indeed.[14]

As I mentioned at the beginning, when I got my job at the School of Scottish Studies in the early 60s, there were no Gaelic speakers with qualifications in music who might be interested in Gaelic songs. That has certainly changed. Singers can get tuition at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, in the National Centre for Excellence in Music in Plockton in Rossshire, at Sabhal Mor Ostaig in Skye and in Benbecula. Gaelic speakers can specialise in their own music in such places as St Mary's School in Edinburgh and in the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. There is a lot of exchange happening between Ireland and Scotland. Gaelic singers travel all over the world and are appreciated by natives of many countries. The material in the School of Scottish Studies is readily available to anyone who asks for it. Tutors who may have no formal qualifications are doing excellent work in schools in the Hebrides. Singers do seem to depend rather a lot on instrumental accompaniment, and sometimes, for me, that accompaniment is obtrusive. Sometimes a song which I know has been learned first from the School of Scottish Studies Archives appears again on a CD, copied from the secondary source, and mistakes are thus perpetuated. But it is lovely to hear younger people showing an interest in traditional versions of songs and singing them with respect. I'm saying nothing of the new raucous music where you cannot hear the words, because I don't claim to understand it. This is an example of what is good enough for me, a song by Alexander MacDonald in praise of Prince Charlie, to the tune Black Jock. It can be heard on the latest CD by Gillebrìde MacMillan, *Air Fòrladh.*[15]

14 Sung by Annie Johnston, Barra. See *Tobar an Dualchais*: SA1954.31 or SA1957.07.

15 Gillebrìde MacMillan, *Air Forladh*. Dealas Limited, 2011.

A Theàrlaich mhic Sheumais

A Theàrlaich mhic Sheumais, mhic Sheumais mhic Theàrlaich,
Leat shiùibhlinn gu h-eutrom 'n àm èighich bhith màrsail,
'S cha b'ann leis a' phlàigh ud a thàrmaich on mhuic.
Bheireadh creideamh is reusan oirnn èirigh mar b'àbhaist,
Leis an àilleagan cheutach 'shliochd èifeachdach Bhàncho,
Mo ghaol a' ghruaidh àlainn a dheàrrsadh orm stuirt!
Thu 'g imeachd gu sùrtail air tùs a' bhatàili
Cha fhroisinn aon driùchda, 's mi dlùth air do shàilibh,
Mi eadar an t-adhar 's an talamh a' seòladh,
Air iteig le aighear, misg-chath agus shòlais,
Is caismeachd phìob-mòra bras-shròiceadh am puirt.

On èibhinneachd ghlòrmhor an t-sòlais a b'àirde
Gar lìonadh le spionnadh air slinneinibh Theàrlaich,
Gun calcadh tu àrdan an càileachd ar cuirp!
Do làthaireachd mhòrchuiseach dh'fhògradh gach fàillinn
Gun tionndadh tu feòdar gach feòla gu stàilinn
Nuair sheallamaid gu sanntach air fabhra do ruisg!
Do ghnùis torach de chruadal de dh'uaisle 's de nàire,
Nach taisicheadh fuathas ro luaidhe do nàmhaid!
'S mur dèanadh fir Shagsainn do mhealladh 's do thrèigsinn
Bhiodh an crùn air a spalpadh, le d'thapadh, air Seumas,
A dh'aindeoin na bèiste leis an d'èirich na h-uilc.[16]

> Charles, son of James, son of James, son of Charles, I'd gladly go with you when the call comes for marching, and not with that horror, the offspring of pigs! Faith and reason would make us rise for him, for the beautiful jewel of the race of Banquo. How I love his fine features that fill me with pride! When you lead with spirit in the forefront of battle, following closely at your heels, I'd not shake a dewdrop.

16 By Alexander MacDonald. Text and translation from Campbell, J. L. (ed.) *Highland Songs of the Forty-five* (Edinburgh, 1984), pp. 52–61. The tune is Black Jock. Learned from singing of the Rev. William Matheson.

Between earth and heaven, I am sailing in the air, on the wings of exultance, battle-drunken, enraptured, while the notes of the great pipes shrilly sound out their tunes.

Oh glorious, joyful, the highest of rapture that fills us with vigour by the shoulders of Charlie, our natural being who fills us with pride! Your magnanimous presence would banish weaknesses. Into steel would convert our flesh's base metal, when we eagerly gaze on your uncovered face! Your face that shows modesty, good birth and valour, undaunted by fear beneath the lead of your enemies, and had not the English betrayed and forsaken you, the crown had been gained for King James with your courage, in spite of the beasts and his vile followers.

The Scottish Tradition Series: Impact and Community

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A RECENT buzzword in UK universities is "impact". It stresses that the work done by university departments should reach out beyond academia into wider society. The School of Scottish Studies Archives has long recognised this principle in terms of releasing material back into the community. The Scottish Tradition Series, a commercial series of audio recordings, has been key in this regard. This article will give a brief history of the Series and will look at some of the editorial principles behind it. Examples will be taken from recordings concerning the Scots song and fiddle traditions in particular. In conclusion, the article will return to the issue of impact.

The roots of the Series can be traced back to 1960, some nine years after the foundation of the department in 1951. In 1960, three LPs with accompanying booklets were produced, namely: Gaelic and Scots Folk Tales (A001/2), Gaelic and Scots Folk Songs (A003/4), and Scottish Instrumental Music (A005/6). One booklet accompanied all three discs.

For the Gaelic Folk Tales, the notes were by John MacInnes, with the selection by the late Calum Maclean, and for Scots Folk Tales, the notes were by Hamish Henderson. For Gaelic Folk Songs, the notes were by James Ross, and for Scots Folk Songs, by Hamish Henderson, with Francis Collinson contributing musical notes in both cases. Finally, Collinson was responsible for the notes for Scottish Instrumental Music.[1]

The material is rich and varied: four Gaelic folktales and three from the Scots tradition appear, including "Silly Jack and the Factor", and "The Fairy Well of Shetland". The song disc includes Jeannie Robertson singing the "Battle of Harlaw", John Strachan's rendition of the bothy song, "Harrowin' Time", and the song "Jamie Raeburn" with the first verses from Jessie Murray, the Buckie fishwife, and the concluding verses from Tom Scott of the Borders. On the instrumental side, examples of fiddling, piping, jew's harp, and accordion are present. The Traveller Edith Whyte, from the North East, gives a fine rendition of "The Beggin Trade" on the song disc, the original recording being made at the 1952 People's Festival Ceilidh in Edinburgh.[2]

If the beggin be as good a trade
As I hae heard them say,
It's time that I was on the road
An joggin doon the brae.

Chorus:
To the beggin I will go, will go,
To the beggin I will go.

And afore that I dae ging awa
I'll let my beard grow lang;
And I winna pare my nails at a'
For the beggars wear them lang.

1 Additional research was undertaken by Donia Etherington.
2 This song appeared as track 11 on Scottish Tradition 20, "The Carrying Stream", a compilation of material from these early discs as well as from other releases of the Series.

I'll gang tae the cobbler's,
And I'll gar him mend my sheen;
I'll gar him pit the sole upon,
Wi a heel-ring roon abeen.

I'll gang tae the tailor's,
They ca' him Maudie Gray;
I'll gar him mak a coat tae me
That'll hap me night and day.

And if there be a weddin,
And we chance to be there,
I'll rise among the weddin folk
And bless the happy pair.

It's some will gie me beef an breid,
And some'll gie me cheese,
An oot amang the weddin folk
I'll gaither bawbees.

An if I come on as weel's I'd like,
It's I'll come back an tell –
But gin I dinna dee that
I'll keep it till mysel.

The first LP that was produced as part of the Scottish Tradition Series was *Bothy Ballads: Music of the North East*. This was issued in 1971 by Tangent Records. The originator of the Series was the ethnomusicologist Dr Peter Cooke who at that time had recently joined the department. As he explained in an interview:

> *It was quite clear early on that one of my briefs, partly as a result of my own conviction, but also long conversations with* [the Danish scholar] *Thorkild Knudsen before he left, that the best thing we could be doing in the School in terms of publication was not so much anthologies and learned articles and so on but learned sound productions, and that's why I embarked on the Scottish Tradition Series. And a certain amount*

> *of my Scottish song fieldwork was based on the need to provide adequate material for that. So I remember, I think early in 1974, going around with Hamish* [Henderson] *to re-record some of the ballads that he'd recorded from singers at an earlier time …*[3]

The guiding principle then was that the material be presented to the public in an audio rather than a written format. This presentation is particularly vital in the case of music and song, where music transcription remains limited in what it can effectively show on the page: far more is gleaned from listening to a performance, and this has been reflected in the debates of ethnomusicologists. The emphasis of the Series overall was reflected in the sleeve-notes of the early releases: "*Scottish Tradition is an integrated series of discs designed to illustrate the various aspects of Scottish Oral Tradition. Recordings are drawn from …* [the] *archives …* [from] *systematic collecting by the School of Scottish Studies*." "Tradition" and "oral tradition" have been contested terms amongst scholars over the years.[4] The Series – by choosing what to and what not to include – conveys implicit ideas of tradition through the use of example. This is a series in which the recordings are not staged, where performances are normally unaccompanied, and where musical arrangements are usually not in place. All the hallmarks of home performance – tea-cups clinking, grandfather-clocks ticking, and even the dreaded chirps of the budgerigar (from a sound engineer's point of view!) – are here.

For some, the Series undoubtedly represents the "authentic" as far as traditional music, song and story are concerned. "Authenticity" is a complex and problematic term, but the ethnomusicologist Bonnie C. Wade states that on one level it is something that looks to the past. There is an emphasis in the Series on those who learned their material via oral tradition in the main, on grass-roots musicians, and often on those who have been untutored. Modes of transmission and issues of continuity are important. Wade also contends that "*Authenticity is … thought of as residing*

3 Katherine Campbell, interview with Dr Peter Cooke, 25 April 2000, School of Scottish Studies Archives, SA2000.004.

4 See Finnegan (1992) for summaries relating to these issues.

in a person … 'authenticity' resembles 'authority'".[5] The Series has always had a focus on the tradition bearer as well as the musical item, indeed some releases focus entirely on the repertoire of one individual. Appearance on a Scottish Tradition release perhaps gives the performer a certain legitimacy as far as his or her place in the tradition is concerned.

Twenty-four releases of the Series have now been published.[6] The main emphasis has been on music and song, but storytelling is also well represented with, for example, the double CD, "Scottish Traditional Tales". Custom and belief features too and "Wooed an Married an Aa" (on the subject of wedding traditions) contains a number of Shetland examples, including Jeemsie Laurenson's description of "The Bedding of the Bride":

> *And the next when midnight had struck, the ceremony of putting the bride to bed. It was aald box beds in those days, you know, built into the wall, where the door closed and opened. And they would take – the bridesmaid … and her sisters would take this bride, take off her robes, her bridal attire, put on her nightgown and put her to bed. But before she lockit the bed door, she would close her eyes an take a stocking from her right foot, throw it like this, an close the eyes like that, and any girl – said to be single girls – that moved around, and any girl at the sock landed on was supposed to be the next bride: that was a good omen.*[7]

The list of recordings to date is as follows:

1. Bothy Ballads
2. Music from the Western Isles
3. Waulking Songs from Barra
4. Shetland Fiddle Music
5. The Muckle Sangs

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5 Wade, 2004, 142.

6 2010 saw the re-release some of recordings previously on cassette or LP, namely *Calum & Annie Johnston: Songs, Stories and Piping from Barra* (double CD: GDTRAX9013D), *James Campbell of Kintail: Gaelic Songs* (GDTRAX 9008), and *Calum Ruadh: Bard of Skye* (GDTRAX9007).

7 SA1970.248.A1, James Laurenson, Fetlar, recorded by Alan Bruford.

6. Gaelic Psalms from Lewis
7. Calum Ruadh: Bard of Skye
8. James Campbell of Kintail: Gaelic Songs
9. The Fiddler and his Art
10. Pibroch: Pipe-Major William MacLean
11. Pibroch: Pipe-Major Robert Brown
12. Pibroch: Pipe-Major R. B. Nicol
13. Calum and Annie Johnston
14. Gaelic Stories told by Peter Morrison
15. Pibroch: George Moss
16. William Matheson
17. Scottish Traditional Tales
18. Clo Dubh Clo Donn
19. Seonag NicCoinnich
20. The Carrying Stream (compilation)
21. Orkney: Land, Sea and Community
22. Chokit on a Tattie: Children's Songs and Rhymes
23. Wooed an Married an Aa: Songs, Tunes and Customs
24. Songs and Ballads from Perthshire Field Recordings of the 1950s

The main genres of Scottish traditional music and song are represented, e.g. fiddling, pibroch, waulking songs, Gaelic psalms, and children's songs. There also has been a focus on tradition bearers and their repertoires, e.g. Seonag NicCoinnich, and Calum and Annie Johnston. Certain geographical areas have received attention, e.g. the Western Isles, Orkney, and Shetland. The general editorship has been undertaken by various staff members over the years, namely Peter Cooke, Morag MacLeod, Mark Trewin, and Katherine Campbell. Several individuals outside the department have been involved as guest editors for recent releases. One of these was Maurice Fleming of Blairgowrie who collected from Traveller singers in Perthshire, and who was the first to make recordings of the well-known family, the Stewarts of Blair. Maurice wrote the notes to the CD entitled "Songs and Ballads from Perthshire Field Recordings of the 1950s" and was able to give his collector's perspective there. It was pleasing to have this CD come out in 2011, the year of the 60th anniversary of the Archives, since the material connected back to

its first decade. An example of one of the singers on the CD is Martha Reid of Birnam, who was well known amongst the Travellers for her knowledge of the Scottish ballads. She has also been recorded by Peter Shepheard of Fife, but has achieved less prominence as a singer than some others on the CD, such as Belle and Sheila Stewart. Her rendition of the supernatural ballad, "The Elfin Knight" (Child 2), is particularly memorable.

O fetch to me aye a Holland shirt
Aye thout either needle or needle work
For you'll wash it in to yon draw well
Where there never was water nor one drop o dew fell.

For you'll hing it oer yon Thornhaugh bush
Where there never was thorns since Adam was born
And it's ho, ho the wind'll blow.

For you'll fetch to me two acres of land
Between thon salt sea and thon salt sea strand
For you'll ploo it up with a devil tup's horn
You will sew it ower with one grain of corn
And it's ho, ho the wind'll blow.

For you will ripen it up with one blink o sand
You'll cut it down with a pea-hen's feather
You'll stook it up by the stung of a nettle
And it's ho, ho the wind'll blow.

For you'll yoke two sparrows in a matchbox
An cart it home to your own farm yard
And it's ho, ho the wind'll blow.

For surely when you put such task on me
I'll surely put aye as hard on you
You'll, how many ships sails in thy forest?
How many strawberries grows on the salt sea?
And it's ho, ho the wind'll blow.[8]

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8 Track 14.

Each release of the Series has been accompanied by a contextual booklet. These typically contain photographs of informants and locations, translations from the Gaelic or a glossary of Scots words as appropriate, notes on comparative versions, biographical notes on informants, suggestions for further reading, and so on. In recent releases, the booklets have typically been of around 40 pages in length. They are central to understanding and interpreting the audio contents of the CD.

Editorial Considerations and Principles

In works where written literature is edited, a great deal of time is generally spent by scholars articulating their principles and policies, and sometimes these actually form the subject of a book in their own right in the case of literary giants, e.g. the guide for editors on the Edinburgh edition of Scott's Waverley novels.[9] Pages can be devoted to issues such as the editing of full-stops and commas, with the overriding principle usually being to stick as closely to source as possible, with anything that has been done editorially being explained and commented on in the notes.

Oral material, when it is being transcribed into a written form, also tends to receive some discussion, with comments on dialect, on what is being transcribed, and on the overall purpose of the transcription all receiving attention in books covering ethnology, folklore and oral history, for example. The case of what happens when field recordings are themselves edited for CD release has received less attention and, with this in mind, I'll now turn to some of the editorial considerations and principles underlying the Scottish Tradition Series.

The process of selection is based on a number of factors including the significance of the material in terms of what the CD is trying to illustrate, the issue of obtaining a balance of tracks (e.g. gender, age of performer, and stylistic traits), and aesthetic considerations such as whether it would be desirable to hear the material repeatedly. We also go through a process

9 Hewitt and Alexander, 1996.

of obtaining permission to use the recording from both the interviewee (or a family member) and the collector. In some cases, however, we are dealing with anonymous individuals, e.g. groups of children, or people who had no descendants or other close family.

The quality of the original recording is a major consideration. Peter Cooke believed that the recordings made by the School of Scottish Studies should be of the highest quality possible and suitable for broadcasting and publication. Many discussions took place in this regard with Fred Kent, the School's Sound Technician at that time, who had worked in the BBC, and "post-mortems" were held on fieldwork recordings, to see what might be improved or done differently next time round. Peter Cooke cited the ethnomusicologist Klaus Wachsmann's comment as his guiding principle: "You have to aim at high quality out of respect for the musicians themselves".[10] The recording environment is often outside the field-worker's control, however, and ceilidhs or outdoor events, for example, will typically include background noise. Sometimes this material can be used, but only in an improved form. Most commercial recordings of traditional music in Scotland nowadays are subject to any number of techniques to improve the finished product, and computer technology looms large in this respect, allowing, for example, for changes of pitch of individual syllables, and for the replacement of a single word. Although the Scottish Tradition Series does not go down to the micro-level used by some commercial artists, there is nevertheless a good deal of work that goes into making the recordings more "listenable to". This is done both in our Sound Lab and by Peter Haigh, a professional sound engineer, at Pier House Studio in Edinburgh. Improvements undertaken may typically include trying to remove background noise and adjusting levels. Sometimes, where background noise is very noticeable, whole verses have to be missed out. The technique of "fade in" and "fade out" can be used to cover problematic starts and finishes. It is very common in field-recordings for performers to make a mistake and then to restart, and here the best

10 SA2000.004.

parts of the various renditions are selected. Any "mistakes", e.g. stutters or word repetitions, are edited out, so that a more fluent performance is given.

It is important to be aware that the material on the Scottish Tradition discs is close to, but not the same as, the primary source, in the sense that a good deal of editorial work may underlie the finished product. An example here is Betsy Johnston's singing of the supernatural ballad, "Tam Lin", which appears on the *Muckle Sangs*. In research for a paper on the ballad, I realised when listening to the original field-recordings that Betsy did not once manage to sing the ballad as it appears on the CD; rather, the track represents an amalgamation of various stanzas from various performances.[11]

Impact

I'll now return to the question of impact. The Research Excellence Framework 2014, a government-led process that all UK universities must respond to, measures the quality of research output and the research environment itself.[12] It follows on from the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise) 2008, and it differs from it in the stress that is placed on impact: namely that academic research should have a broader reach than academia alone. Economic, political and social impact are emphasised, and specific questions have been put to help universities engage with the concept. These include: Through what means have people become aware of the research? What has the impact been? What evidence is there that impact has occurred?

Publication is clearly vital to the first of these questions. Central to the general public's knowledge of the Scottish Tradition Series is the fact that it has been issued on commercial record labels. These have the ability to look after marketing, sales, radio air-play, and so on, and have the overall function of making the material more accessible. The first LPs and

11 Campbell, 2007.

12 See http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/

cassettes were issued under the Tangent Records label in London, and the later cassettes and CDs by Greentrax Recordings Ltd in East Lothian. Dr Ian Green, the managing director of Greentrax, regards the Series as very important to his label in terms of its role in highlighting the traditional arts. It is worth pointing out, though, that these recordings have a small circulation, attract a specialist audience, and require financial support to be released – the Scottish Arts Council (later Creative Scotland) has been central here.

Items from the Series have received air-time on, for example, BBC Radio Scotland and Radio nan Gàidheal. In terms of education, tracks have been used to provide example material in several contexts. The Standard Grade Music Curriculum which began in the 1980s took the focus away from Classical Western repertoire in the main, to give much more of an emphasis to traditional music and to other genres. Concepts such as "Gaelic Psalm", "Scots Ballad" and "Bothy Ballad" were included, and as a result have been learned by thousands of children in Scotland. The staff-development pack for Standard Grade Music produced by Jo Miller in 1988, entitled *The Music of Scotland* and published by the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, reflected this new emphasis. It contained an accompanying cassette which included material drawn from the Series. This was also true of *Traditional Scottish Songs and Music* (2001), aimed at the 5–14 and Standard Grade curricula and written by Katherine Campbell and Ewan McVicar. Examples on the accompanying CD included Jeannie Robertson's ballad, "The Gypsy Laddies", and the puirt-a-beul, "Domhnall Dubh" and "Nighean Na Cailliche" sung by Seonag NicCoinnich. Items from the Series have been used for University-level courses, e.g. at Edinburgh and at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Finally, the CD of Scots children's songs and rhymes entitled "Chokit on a Tattie" and edited by Ewan McVicar, has been of considerable interest to nursery and primary schools, due to the wealth of nonsense rhymes, skipping songs and handclapping chants that it contains.

Certain CDs have been important at community level, and I'd like to look briefly at *The Fiddler and his Art, Scottish Tradition 9* in this regard. The CD includes performers from Shetland, Orkney, the Western Isles,

and the North East. It highlights the playing styles from these heartlands of the instrument, and enables listeners to make aural comparisons and musicians to imitate stylistic nuances. Geographical styles of fiddle playing, like distinctive local dialects, are important markers of identity, differentiating one area from another. The CD helps to raise awareness of the place of fiddling in community life, and highlights the richness of a "local" musical culture. Quite often, listeners hear people that they know (or knew), or perhaps are related to, and this is frequently a source of pride.

The community musician rather than the commercial artist is very much to the fore, and here Ruth Finnegan's concept of "the hidden musicians" may usefully be applied.[13] Finnegan conducted her study in the English New Town of Milton Keynes, and found that much musical activity was in evidence across the various genres – classical, rock, jazz – through orchestras, rock groups, sessions, and so on. On the surface, though, Milton Keynes did not appear to be a place that held the promise of much musical activity. It is this same non-professional, community musician that forms the backbone of much of the Series. One example here is Pat Shearer, the son of a Stronsay farmer, who spent some time in the Merchant Navy before coming back to work his father's farm, and then later ran a taxi business. Pat is accompanied on the recording by David Linklater on electric piano. The notes in the booklet tell us: "*These two musicians enjoy playing together, usually at home, for Pat Shearer's occupations have given him few opportunities to play for dances. He describes himself as a 'fireside fiddler'*".[14] Here then, we have an example of a "house fiddler" rather than a dance musician. The track highlights the important place of music in the home, a theme discussed by Gary West in a chapter in the *Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*.[15] Pat plays "The Stronsay Waltz" and "Jock Halcrow" on the CD, drawn originally from a 1985 field-recording by Peter Cooke. The booklet tells us that these two tunes were well known to Orkney fiddlers. The first was composed by J. Chalmers and "*there is*

13 Finnegan, 2007.
14 Booklet, p. 8.
15 West, 2006.

some doubt about the authorship of the [second] … *It was in the repertory of Jock Halcrow and his dance band and in time the tune not only acquired his name but it also came to be thought that he was the composer. Its style suggests it could have originated in any part of the British Isles but Pat Shearer's ornamentation gives it a decidedly Orcadian character*."[16]

In addition to highlighting a community's repertoire, some of the material on the Series reflects in a tangible way the context of the performance. On the Shetland Fiddling CD, for example, the noise of feet stamping and of "hoochs and cries" can be heard in the track featuring croft dancing on the Island of Yell, where the performers are Willy B. Henderson and Bobby Jamieson.[17]

I'd now like to turn to two examples where we can see a very direct influence of the Series on individual musicians. John MacDonald's performance of "The Rovin Ploughboy" appears on the *Muckle Sangs* CD (track 2b), and Hamish Henderson tells in the accompanying notes how he came across it:

> *In the Spring of 1952, while on a collecting tour in the Turriff area of Aberdeenshire, I was given the name of John MacDonald of Pitgaveny, Elgin, my informant assuring me that he knew many old songs. Not long after, I met Mr MacDonald for the first time. He is a mole-catcher and rat-catcher by profession: in addition, he runs a flourishing local concert party, and is well known as a performer on the melodeon.*
>
> *Among the first of his songs to be tape-recorded for the School's sound archive was The Rovin Ploughboy, which he had listed among his favourites – he declared that it had "a lovely air", which indeed it has.*

The song text runs:

> Come saddle tae me my aul' gray mare,
> Come saddle tae me my pony O,

16 A5 booklet which accompanies the CD, p. 8.
17 Track 1, "Soldier's Joy / Deil Among the Tailors".

An I'll tak the road and I'll go far away
After ma rovin ploughboy O.

Chorus:
Ploughboy O, ploughboy O,
I'll follow the rovin ploughboy O.

Last night I lay on a fine feather-bed,
Sheets and blankets sae cosy O;
This night I maun lie on a cold barn-shed,
Wrappit in the arms of ma ploughboy O.

A champion ploughman ma Geordie O,
Cups and medals and prizes O,
On bonnie Deveronside there are none to compare
Wi ma jolly rovin ploughboy O.

So fare ye well tae aul Huntly toon,
Fare ye well Drumdelgie O.
For noo I'm on the road an I'm goin far away
After ma rovin ploughboy O.

The lyrics and tune were clearly appreciated by the group "Malinky" who used them for their version of the song which appears on the CD entitled "3 Ravens". Although incorporating accompaniment, as well as introductory and concluding instrumental arrangements which serve to elongate the performance, not to mention a female lead singer – Karine Polwart –Malinky still adhere closely to their original source.

The second example I'd like to discuss is where a musician borrows from the actual source material to create a new composition. The late Martyn Bennett used with very good effect a sample of the voice of Calum Ruadh, Bard of Skye, in a track called "Why?" on his CD entitled "Grit", along with material from other tradition bearers.[18] It is interesting that the

18 "Grit" (track 6); see further, http://www.martynbennett.com/album_05_grit_01.html

bard's speaking voice – which one might describe as itself "musical" – is selected. This can be heard at the very start of Bennett's composition and again towards the end. Calum Ruadh's original track was called "The Old Home", and the field recording was made by the Danish ethnomusicologist, Thorkild Knudsen. This Scottish Tradition CD is a creative work in its own right particularly in terms of "The Fairy Song"[19] where Knudsen overlays two separate performances of the bard's voice to create a stereo effect.

The sample on "Grit" was used with the knowledge and consent of family members and of the School of Scottish Studies Archives, and the source of the material was documented in Bennett's CD notes. This is perhaps a model of how traditional material should be handled. However, there have been cases from across the globe where material from recordings made by ethnomusicologists has been sampled on an unauthorised basis, and this problem has been discussed by Valdimar Hafstein and others.[20] Needless to say, this is a sensitive issue where offence can easily be caused to source musicians or to their communities, with issues of remuneration and intellectual property rights being prominent.

Conclusion

The ethos of the Scottish Tradition Series since its inception has been to bring the material held in the Archives to a wider audience, including teachers, schoolchildren and musicians. It has helped to raise awareness of geographical difference with regard to Scottish traditional music and song. It has also helped to give recognition to the non-commercial artist, to the community or home musician. Recently, however, the Archives have moved into a new era in which much of the material is available online through the Tobar an Dualchais website.[21] Anyone with internet access, anywhere in the world, can listen to it free of charge. Against this background the question might legitimately be raised: What function

19 Booklet, p. 18.
20 See Hafstein, 2004.
21 www.tobarandualchais.co.uk

does the Scottish Tradition Series now serve? I would argue that there are three main reasons why its relevance persists, namely synthesis, context, and aesthetic experience. The CDs are compiled by editors with a deep knowledge of the oral traditions they are discussing and who devote much time to selecting significant material and to commenting on it. When the material is synthesised to make up a particular CD, we begin to see the traits of a particular tradition or perhaps of a particular repertoire. The booklets help us to understand the overall context of the performances and these typically include illustrations, linguistic aids, biographies of performers, comparative examples of songs or tunes, and a bibliography. The audio material on the web exists in a relatively unedited form, but with the CD recordings, the aesthetic experience is important, and some tracks have been subjected to considerable editorial improvement in order to enhance the experience for listeners.

It seems fitting to conclude with the concept of 'cultural equity' espoused by the American scholar Alan Lomax who made a vast collection of field recordings from many cultures of the world.[22] Some of Lomax's recordings feature on the Scottish Tradition Series, e.g. "Chokit on a Tattie". In an article entitled "Appeal for Cultural Equity" published in 1977 he proposed:

> *All cultures need their share of the airtime electronic communication can afford. When country folk or tribal peoples hear or view their own traditions in the big media, projected with the authority generally reserved for the output of large urban centers, and when they hear their traditions taught to their own children, something magical occurs. They see that their expressive style is as good as that of others, and, if they have equal communicational facilities, they will continue it.*[23]

22 See Szwed, 2010 and the Association for Cultural Equity, http://culturalequity.org/ Certain of the Rounder Records releases focus on Lomax's work in Scotland, e.g. Jeannie Robertson: The Queen Among the Heather; Singing in the Streets: Scottish Children's Songs; and Folk Songs of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales: 1951 Edinburgh People's Festival Ceilidh.

23 Cohen, 2003, 289.

Many of the points he raises still hold true today. The recordings have a double impact. They both bring back the fruits of fieldwork to the source communities and give audiences outside those communities a heightened awareness of diverse cultural traditions.

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Collection of Place-Names from Oral Sources

Doreen Waugh

Doreen Waugh completed a PhD in 1984 at the Scottish Place-Name Survey, School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh. The two supervisors for this PhD (on the place-names of six parishes of the former county of Caithness) were Ian Fraser and Professor John MacQueen. Since 2002, she has been Honorary Fellow in Celtic and Scottish Studies, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures. Following retirement from her post as Assistant Head at The Mary Erskine School, Edinburgh, Doreen has devoted her time to research on the place-names of the Northern Isles and Caithness. Recently, she has also become particularly interested in the dialect of Shetland and is a member of the Shetland ForWirds committee, based in Lerwick, Shetland.

It seems appropriate to begin with a snapshot from the history of place-name collection by staff of the Scottish Place-Name Survey, based at the School of Scottish Studies. Thereafter, Eileen Brooke-Freeman (Shetland Place-Names Project Officer) will provide information about the ongoing work of collection from oral sources which is being done in Shetland as part of the extensive work of the Shetland Amenity Trust, managed by Jimmy Moncrieff. The Scottish Place-Name Survey is very pleased to have been associated with this work from its inception.

The expression 'oral sources' rather than 'people' may seem a little pernickety but it has been carefully chosen to indicate that while place-names can be recorded directly from an informant by the researcher, they are sometimes collected from an intermediate person who does not actually use the name but who heard an older person mention it and made a mental note of it at the time. The ultimate oral source is, therefore, the person who actively used the name, although it may have come to the collector through the written notes of someone like John Stewart in Shetland[1]. The

1 Stewart, J., *Shetland Place-Names*. Lerwick, Shetland, 1987. There is additional Stewart material in the Shetland Archives which has now been recorded and mapped by the staff of the Shetland Place-Names Project.

work of collecting, from oral tradition, place-names which have not been deemed sufficiently 'important' to be included on any printed map of an area is absolutely essential to building up a picture of life in the last century or so. All place-names are 'important'! Readers are already likely to be aware of the significance of names in an ethnological context but the amazing retentiveness of folk memory in a rural community where, until very recently, the way of life has kept people close to the sea and land which supported them is worth noting again and again. All is now changing at a very great rate as people Twitter and Skype in front of their computer screens and action does need to be taken before memory of direct contact between people and the land is lost. The internet does, of course, have its merits with its vast capacity for storage and dissemination of information and there is no intention of denigrating its usefulness here. The Kist o Riches (Tobar an Dualchais), for example, is a wonderful web-based resource.

Interview with Informant, Ian Fraser

It seemed that the best way of approaching the subject of collection of place-names from oral sources was to engage in some direct collection from an oral source and, having identified the best possible informant, Ian Fraser, former Director of the Scottish Place-Name Survey, he agreed to be interviewed informally on 9 June 2011 in the University of Edinburgh Scottish Place-Name Survey, 29 George Square, Edinburgh, surrounded by some of the archive material which he had helped to assemble and with the interviewer, one of his former PhD students, taking notes rather than using a tape recorder of the type mentioned later in this introductory section.

Ian Fraser is from Gairloch on the west coast of Scotland and is a native Gaelic speaker, which served him well in his collection of previously unrecorded place-names, although he has lived in Edinburgh since he came to the city as a student in 1959. The other members of staff in the photograph are (on Ian's right) Neil MacQueen and (on Ian's left) Fred Kent, both sadly deceased, and also Morag MacLeod, an expert in Gaelic song now retired from the department and living in her native Scalpay.

Neil MacQueen, Ian Fraser, Fred Kent and Morag MacLeod[2]

Ian started with the date of establishment of the Scottish Place-Name Survey which was 1953, a couple of years after the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies itself in 1951. The first Head of the Place-Name Survey (and I have this information from Professor W.F.H. Nicolaisen) was Winifred M. Temple, who left the School in 1955. Ian Fraser did not mention Winifred Temple but he did mention various other scholars who supported place-name research in these early years, including Basil Megaw, who had an interest in Scandinavian place-names in Scotland and in the Isle of Man and was always very willing to share his knowledge and academic expertise. I owe him a particular debt of gratitude for the many discussions we had about Caithness place-names after I joined the department as a postgraduate student in 1980. Hamish Henderson, likewise, took a helpful interest in my work on Caithness place-names and shared many of the travellers' tales he had himself collected from informants in Caithness.

2 Thanks to the School of Scottish Studies Archives for permission to use this and the other illustrations included in the first part of this paper.

Professor W.F.H. (Bill) Nicolaisen was appointed as Director of the Scottish Place-Name Survey in 1956, after a very informal interview which began with an application for a lectureship and ended with the offer of the post of Director. According to Ian Fraser, events developed as follows: a lectureship in the Scottish Place-Name Survey was advertised in 1956, and W.F.H. Nicolaisen applied, although still working towards completion of his Ph.D. at Glasgow University. His interview went very well and before it came to an end he was offered the Directorship of the Survey which, after consulting his supervisors in Glasgow, he accepted. His subsequent international recognition as one of the best onomasticians of his generation fully repaid the confidence of the interviewers, although Professor Nicolaisen did not stay in Scotland throughout his academic career.

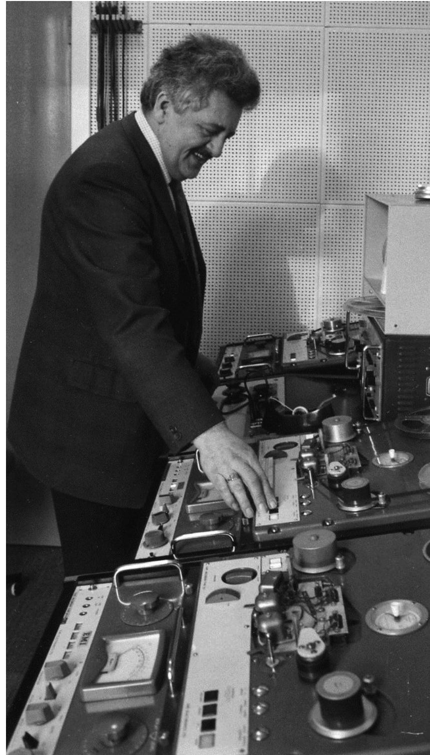
The collection of material (both place-names and folklore) from oral tradition really began in 1960. Bill Nicolaisen focused on collecting material from areas where the Gaelic language was on the verge of extinction, such as Perthshire, Arran, Aberdeenshire, Banffshire, the Great Glen (from Fort Augustus south, where there were still one or two fluent speakers and carriers of Highland oral tradition), and other areas as well. Clearly, this was not a one-man job and Ian Fraser was appointed as a lecturer in the department in 1965 to give support to Bill in the mammoth task ahead. Their first joint trip was to the island of Lewis in 1966.

The next picture illustrates Bill Nicolaisen in typical pose with Mr Alexander Rattray, an informant from Banffshire. The date is July, 1960. Ian particularly asked me to note the recording equipment that Bill is using in this photograph along with the 6” map. He has a large Sennheiser microphone in his right hand and a reel-to-reel recorder on the ground. The tapes from these field interviews are now a valuable resource available in the School of Scottish Studies Sound Archives.

Similar equipment to that illustrated in the photograph of W.F.H. Nicolaisen and Mr Rattray was used during Ian Fraser’s first field trip with Bill Nicolaisen to Lewis in 1966. To be precise, as Ian was in interview, they used a Butoba recorder which had the advantage of being quite light to carry. It was battery-operated and could be used with 3- or 5-inch tape

Professor WFH Nicolaisen and Mr Alexander Rattray, 1960

(5-inch was the preferred size). The Butoba was eventually replaced by the UHER 4000 which was standard for the BBC and, although it was heavier, it had the huge advantage of being able to run on power from battery or mains which greatly simplified the lives of the two interviewers. Ian also noted the welcome invention of the more versatile multi-plug (15-, 13- and 5-amp). The Sennheiser microphone was chosen by the technician Fred Kent (see photos above and below) who had great influence on the method of collection, thanks to his vast technical knowledge and understanding of the needs of the field worker. By comparison with modern technology,



Fred Kent in his sound laboratory at the School of Scottish Studies

however, this equipment was not easy to carry around and Ian commented that he mostly used notebooks, all of which are now filed in the office of the Scottish Place-Name Survey.

In addition to collection of material from mainland Scotland, Ian Fraser noted that interviewing of informants in the Hebrides was undertaken by students from Jordanhill College of Education, where there was a good Gaelic Department at the time (late 1950s and 1960s), staffed by fluent speakers with contacts in the west. Ian said, and I quote his exact words, "*A man in North Lewis was very good and,* ***therefore****, an extensive collection of names from the west side of Lewis was made*." (The emphasis is mine.) That,

of course, is something which affects all collection of material from oral tradition – one is totally dependent on the informant. I have so often heard variants of the following statement about old people who have just died: "*Of course, if so and so had still been alive, he/she knew all these names …*". At the other end of the age spectrum, Ian noted that there was particularly good school contact through head teachers of primary schools in Lewis, Harris and Islay. It is excellent to encourage the young to listen to and acquire the names used by their parents and grandparents. Jakob Jakobsen, in the introduction to his collection of dialect and place-name material from Shetland, also made the comment that younger people made very good informants because they were more forthcoming and had a good understanding of what he was trying to do and "*had better opportunity than I had to question the old people, and, in general, could more easily obtain information from them*".[3] John Stewart and, in turn, Eileen Brooke-Freeman also made use of the young in their collection of place-names.

In the 1960s, the paper record, backed up by pronunciation of place-names and information about their localities, was seen to be of paramount importance. 6-inch OS maps (given free to the Scottish Place-Name Survey by the Ordnance Survey, in return for occasional consultancy work) were sent out to selected individuals in the target areas, with instructions that they should mark numbers in red on the map to correspond to the numbers in red in jotters or notebooks. Chosen collectors were asked to record all information available from willing informants and to make note of any written information available locally but not necessarily known about beyond the immediate vicinity of the research area. Lists of field-names for each site were encouraged and these were noted in green on the map and in the jotter. Field-names are particularly subject to change with change in ownership or agricultural practice, but they do sometimes tenaciously outlive their owners. Collectors often apologized for the state of the maps which they returned to the Place-Name Survey, because they had been enthusiastically handled by the owners or tenants of the land.

3 Jakobsen, J., 1985 reprint, *An Etymological Dictionary of the Norn Language in Shetland*. Lerwick, Shetland, p.xxviii.

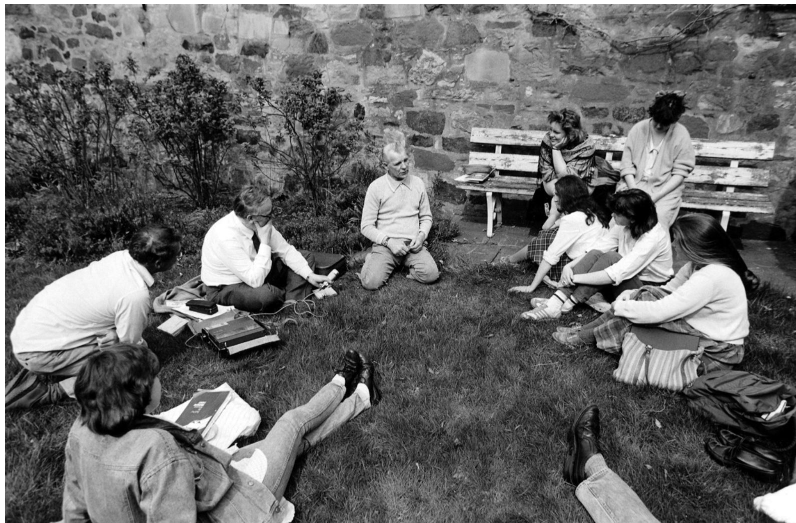
The resultant record is thorough although a little haphazard in coverage of the country and is totally dependent on the capabilities and enthusiasm of the informants and collectors. Central and western Scotland fared rather better than other parts.

Ian Fraser concentrated on North Argyll, sometimes working with Donald Archie MacDonald in that area. He also worked with him in Kiltarlity between Inverness and the Muir of Ord – an area where Gaelic was nearly extinct. Ian thought that Donald Archie had an incredible ability to relate to informants and make them feel at ease, which is always an initial difficulty in recording. Ian's exact words were that, "*Donald Archie was the perfect interviewer. He made everybody his friend.*" Ian's technique with informants was to work outwards on the map (or in conversation) about one mile in radius from the person's own house. He commented incidentally on the very knowledgeable but modest people he met who wouldn't think their information useful but who were often the most reliable sources of new information.

Donald Archie MacDonald interviewing Alan MacQueen, May 1988

Ian was able to make a good collection of coastal names from a fisherman on the north coast, between Bettyhill and Durness, who knew his local territory very well. Gaelic was spoken in this coastal region at the time and Ian worked with Donald Archie MacDonald on this trip. Ian would start with place-names and then conversation would broaden out to include other types of information, as already described.

Sometimes Ian Fraser worked with Alan Bruford, seen here with Duncan Williamson and students in the back garden of the School of Scottish Studies. Some readers will know Alan Bruford, sadly now deceased, from his collection of the folklore of Shetland. Ian Fraser also did a recording session in Orkney in 1974 and, in the early 1970s he came to Shetland – staying with Tom Anderson, or Tammie Anderson, the 'eartkent' Shetland fiddler and composer of fiddle tunes. Ian says that he also stayed in a haunted cottage in Yell where he couldn't get the fire going. The memory was chilling in all respects!



Alan Bruford and Duncan Williamson with students

These three members of staff – Fraser, Bruford and MacDonald – worked in tandem to collect ethnological material. Place-names were frequently used as the entry into the whole process of collection. People would locate their minds in a landscape and then go on to give a huge amount of information, fleshing out the linguistic and cultural background of the place. Ian remembered one place (Elness) where he and the other two men collected information about witchcraft and had to put a red mark on the tape with a note to say that it should only be listened to by the recording team!

Conclusion

In conclusion, the following is a summary of what Ian Fraser said about place-names and language in Lewis and it is entirely relevant to include it here because there are so many parallels between Shetland and the Western Isles:

> *Lewis has one of the highest densities of minor names Ian Fraser recorded, apart from North Uist. Lewis had little disruption of population from the Norse period onwards – little in the way of Clearances – the population was conservative in its use of language and place-names and kept using the place-names without knowing their derivation, thus preserving Norse elements coined during the period of Norse occupation. The Leodhasachs may have been insular in their attitudes but some of them were also very far-travelled – Valparaiso was just over the horizon for some sailors – but they came back to an unchanged land and liked it to stay that way. Many Shetlanders must have felt exactly the same longing for the stability and unchanging quality of the place which they regarded as home.*

Ian Fraser made some sound recordings while he was in Shetland in the early 1970s and these are available in the Sound Archives of the School and are well worth the effort of a visit to the department. Eileen Brooke-Freeman has been engaged in more recent place-name recording in Shetland, using similar principles and yet very different methods of collection, with the advantages of modern technology to pinpoint place-names on the map and make them widely available. Her account of this impressive work follows.

Shetland Place Names Project

Eileen Brooke-Freeman

Eileen's interest in place-names stems from her childhood in Shetland learning local names from family members and an introduction to Scottish ethnology, through the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies, whilst studying geography at the University of Edinburgh. She trained as an archivist and worked in Lincoln and Chester for 13 years before returning to Shetland in 2001 to establish and run the Shetland Place Names Project.

Introduction

I am delighted the conference celebrating the 60th anniversary of the School of Scottish Studies is being held in Shetland and to have the opportunity to talk about the Shetland Place Names Project. My first introduction to the School came 25 years ago when I took a course in Scottish Ethnology at Edinburgh University. Little did I know that it would eventually lead me to return to my native Shetland 10 years ago to establish the Shetland Place Names Project.

Shetland Amenity Trust is a charitable organisation dedicated to preserving, enhancing and promoting Shetland's cultural and natural heritage, with responsibility for Shetland's archaeology, biological records, architectural and environmental improvement, woodlands, Shetland Museum and Archives and the tourism organisation, Promote Shetland. In 1998 it was recognised that place-names are an important component of our cultural heritage, fitting logically within the Trust's remit. Doreen Waugh was pivotal in the establishment of the project, having originally brought forward the idea. A project plan was developed and funding secured to set up a pilot project to systematically record all available information on Shetland's place-names and establish a comprehensive database of Shetland place-names linking it to digital maps to enable users to relate the names precisely to their locations.

The project planned to build on the achievements of place-name scholars such as Jakob Jakobsen and John Stewart who dedicated years to recording and interpreting Shetland place-names. Jakob Jakobsen in the 1890s and John Stewart in the 1950s amassed vast collections of Shetland place-names which they scrutinised and interpreted in detail, culminating in Jakobsen's *The Place-Names of Shetland* and Stewart's *Shetland Place-names.* Their approach was to arrange the names by linguistic elements rather than geographically, resulting in some difficulties when relating the names precisely to their locations. Subsequently one of our key aims was to locate all recorded names on maps, augmenting their work by not only adding more place-names, but putting the names they collected and explored linguistically into their geographic context.[1]

The project has stimulated a tremendous amount of interest throughout Shetland and beyond, resulting in considerable amounts of unrecorded information being brought to our attention. From a three-year Heritage Lottery Fund pilot, the Shetland Place Names Project has become one of Shetland Amenity Trust's core activities. We are pulling together all known records of place-names and adding the many oral names which are at great risk of being lost entirely. The old place-names are a particularly fragile resource in this era of digital maps and satellite navigation; our modern lifestyle means that increasingly fewer people use coastal landmarks or waypoints through the hills. Priority is given to collecting names from oral sources before those names which do not appear on maps or survive in documents die out altogether.

A vast number of names relate to fishing and crofting, with individual rigs, geos and rocks all carrying names, which were passed down between generations of people living in the same area. Additionally, names have frequently been written down, but not plotted on maps, highlighting an urgency to talk to older residents who remember them and help locate them before the information vanishes forever. The project concentrates on recording these oral names first, prior to checking documentary sources

1 Methods explored by Jakobsen, Stewart and the Shetland Place Names Project are explored in more detail in Sigurðardóttir and Smith, 2010.

and undertaking linguistic analysis. The urgent need to preserve the oral record – recognised by both Jakobsen and Stewart – is still very apparent but, sadly, some of our key informants have now died, while other, potential informants have either died or become incapacitated before being interviewed.

Recording

An excellent starting point has been working with the network of local history groups. Currently 20 groups meet mainly through the winter months, but some continue their activities throughout the year. They have been instrumental in identifying potential informants for each local community and to date we have worked directly with 14 history groups

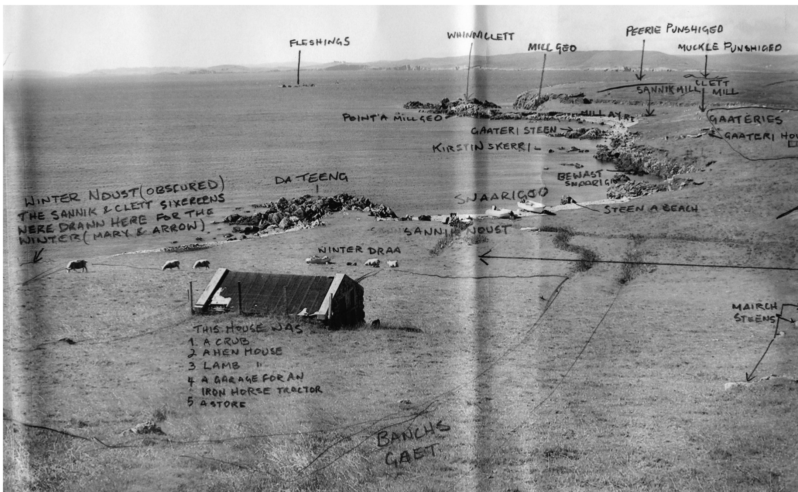
Discussing Unst place-names with pupils from Uyeasound Primary School
(photograph Barbara Priest)

staging recording sessions in their communities. Other key groups include the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and Care Centres where staff acted as recorders helping to note names on maps and recording sheets from day care residents. Work with primary schools has included supplying local information, maps and documents for local studies and Viking topics to supplement national curriculum resources.[2] Recording place-names has also formed part of EcoSchools and other school assignments.

A range of recording techniques are employed including using copy maps and recording sheets, taping and digitally recording conversations, studying old maps and aerial photographs, walking the ground and photographing sites, and extracting information from documentary sources. The photo opposite shows names from Sandwick, Whalsay annotated on a photograph. We record each place-name on a copy map or aerial photograph with a running number adding details, including a phonetic spelling, the precise geographic location and a record of any alternative names, to the recording sheet. A description of the type of feature and information about origins of the name or suggested interpretations are also noted. All known names are recorded including those for features such as rigs, tracks, outbuildings, wells, mills, noosts (places where boats are drawn up) and rocks, whether named on the map or not. Names that are mis-named or mis-positioned on the maps are also corrected. Recording conversations helps determine pronunciation and therefore spelling and yields further background information about the locality. Some locations in the field are recorded with Global Positioning Systems (GPS) whereby satellites provide a grid reference which can later link to digital maps.

Various tools act as memory triggers including Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, especially the c.1880, 1901 and 1973 editions, photographs and aerial photographs. Particularly valuable has been copies of the RCAHMS Royal Air Force post-war survey of 1944–1951. We have teamed these up with transcripts of the names collected by John Stewart in 1951 to help pinpoint individual rig, hill and coastal names.

2 Prior to my input, school children were introduced to Viking place names through a workbook page of Lincolnshire examples.



Whalsay History Group members' annotated place-names on photographs and maps

We are also extracting information from documentary and printed sources, deposited in the local museums, library and archives. It is also very important to cross-check written evidence with current local knowledge to avoid mistakes in suggested origins of names.

John Stewart Archive

The papers of John Stewart of Whalsay deposited in the Shetland Archives are one of our most useful sources.[3] In 1951 Stewart, a Shetlander living and working in Aberdeen, followed the model of similar projects in western Norway and issued almost 5,000 numbered questionnaires to schoolchildren to take home to their parents and grandparents, and also to other houses in the district. The questionnaires asked respondents to record every place-name

3 SA D.27/1/1-100.

they knew, spelling the names as they said them and grouping by names on their croft, names in the hill, names at the shore and names in the sea.

The response was overwhelming. Almost 1,200 original sheets are now deposited in the Shetland Archives, some listing up to 250 names. From the record sheets, Stewart extracted lists of names for his own field notes, which he added to and amended on his annual field trips. He traced every 6 inch: 1 mile OS map for the whole of Shetland, copying all the names as they appeared on the map. These were stuck into books and gradually annotated and amended during his annual field trips. He then proceeded to compile alphabetical lists of names covering each parish; these lists are estimated to contain over 30,000 different place-names. John Stewart's detailed study of Shetland island and farm names, was published posthumously as *Shetland Place-Names* in 1987, ten years after his death. It comprises almost 4,000 names, but to his disappointment the immense volume of information amassed meant that he was unable to subject the entire collection to the detailed scrutiny he desired.[4]

In order to help make the entire collection more accessible, we are striving to pinpoint these names on maps, adding information about these and other known place-names. Transcripts of the original sheets are taken out to folk in each community to try and verify names and, more importantly, locate them on the map. It is a slow process as many of the sheets are difficult to read due to Stewart's work method. As he copied names onto his subsequent lists, he crossed them off the record sheets, often almost completely obliterating the name. The lists work in the same way as OS maps, jolting memories and resulting in sheet names being corrected and added to. They are particularly effective when used in conjunction with enlarged copies of the RCAHMS aerial photographs and we are pinpointing the exact location of many of these almost obsolete place names and succeeding in mapping more of Stewart's names.

4 In 1963 Stewart wrote: 'My place-name stuff is an immense accumulation now. The problem is to get anything published … I would certainly be willing to publish it as a book or books. The difficulty is finding time to polish it off as I would like it.' (Stewart 1987, p. viii).

SHETLAND

COLLECTION OF PLACE-NAMES

My house is called..........

in the group of houses called..........

in the village (or toon) of..........

in the parish (or island) of..........

It had the older name of..........

The postal address is..........

....

Write every name you know near your home. Spell the names as you say them; for example, Soombra, Bressa, Whalsa, Saanis, Waas, Skalawa, Rünis Hill. Put two dots where this peculiar Shetland *ü* sound occurs. Add in brackets ( ) what each name represents, for example, Yuxie (high geo), da Valgards (underwater skerries), Loomshun (shallow pool), Bilyinabreak (round hill). If you know any story about a name, or its meaning, or when it was given, say so. Group the names as follows:—

1. Names on your Croft.

Write down all houses, foundations (mills, skeos), yards, dykes, paths between walls (stiggies, trances), wall-gaps (slaps), gates (grinnds), brigs, wirlies, mounds (rünies, kumbels), stone-heaps (cairnies, roags), march-stones, quarries, punds, gerdies, quoys, lubba, sheep-crüs, rests (büls) for animals, paths (getts), ditches (stanks), burns, wells, ponds (hols, püls, pows), springs (spys), bogs, dams (clooses), rigs, fields, parks, meadows, grass patches (bletts, toons, toomals), strips between rigs, flat parts, steep parts, earth ridges, hollows, knowes, hools, rocks, stones, shore names, and everything that has a name.

2

2. Names in the Hill. (Include your scattald, peat ground, and the parts you travel in.)

Hills (warts, vords, " fields ", kames, ridges, brakes, hools, knowes), tufts (toogs), rocky parts (bergs, hamars), steep parts (byurgs, braes, broos), valleys (slackies, snecks, gils, skords, daals, vaas), slopes (lees), ledges, slippery parts, stony parts, flat parts, trodden parts, sheep tracks, hollows, rocks, stones, heather, green spots (bletts), mosses, pastures (hogas, scattalds), peat ground, walls, grinnds, old ruins, mills, crüs, sheep-büls, otterhadds, hiding-holes, burns, mires, waterfalls, wading-places, pools (shuns), lochs, names at loch shores.

3. Names at the Shore. (Take these in order round the coast.)

Nesses (points, mools, taings, tongues, noops, bards, heads), shallows (spurds, flyoogs, swarfs), rocks (cletts, ledges, heelyicks, banchs, ords), holms (calfs, huggs), stacks (steens, skerries, baas, fleshens, gaats), caves (helyers, gloops), cliffs, geos, voes, lagoons (hoobs), firths, bights, wicks, sounds, guts, harbours, beaches, eids, airs, nousts, piers, loading places (lodberries), wading places (vaddels), fishing places (craigstones), sand, sandbanks, links, rock bridges, saltwater holes, tide strings (roosts), stormy places, whirlpools, seaweed.

4. Names in the Sea.

Names, as given under heading 3, and names in the interior of uninhabited isles where you keep sheep or fish, cross-bearings when fishing (meeads), fishing grounds (saets, raeds, klakks, skors), shallows, sea-rocks, sea-names for landmarks which have other names on land, tide strings and roosts, sounds and channels.

General Instructions. If born elsewhere, add the croft, hill and shore names of your birthplace, stating the exact district. These, with the names on holms and uninhabited isles, are extremely valuable. So are names heard from old people and not used now. You probably know names which no one else does. Please return this paper. Thank you for your help.

Names from your district will be published locally.

John Stewart record sheet (D.27/1/1 courtesy Shetland Museum and Archives)

Shetland Place Names Database

We established the Shetland Place Names Database which is linked to digital maps. Based on the Scottish Place-Name Database,[5] it includes fields for linguistic, historical and geographical analysis of place-names in their environment. Possible searches include all the names for a particular area, all occurrences of a particular feature, e.g. all noosts or skerries, all names that include a specific linguistic element, e.g. all *borg*- or *kví*-names, and all the names which include a particular word, e.g. baa (a sunken rock). Unlike the Scottish database, the Shetland Place Names Database precisely locates each place name with a 10-figure grid reference showing the location on maps. This is achieved through our Geographic Information System (GIS).[6]

GIS Digital Map System

The key to recording and presenting data is the use of digital mapping. The interface between the database and GIS allows place-names to be plotted on digital maps and then transferred into the database for the addition of further information such as the source, classification, informant details and pronunciation. This enables quick and accurate data entry. Digital mapping also provides a powerful means of presenting data. We can show layers of information gathered from different sources, and maps can be created based on the specific searches previously mentioned: for example, all the names for one village, all names containing the element quoy or hwaes (from ON *kví*: a cattle enclosure), and all rigs, noosts or baas. Results appear on the Shetland map and in a table, which can be enlarged to study a specific area or individual place-name. This Otterswick example shows the quantity of names added to the 1973 edition OS map. The new names in red increase the total for this small hamlet from 30 to almost 100.

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5 The Scottish Place-Name Database is based at the University of Edinburgh's Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies.

6 ESRI ArcGIS 9.

Selected Attributes of Place names

FID	NameAsDisp	Article	NGR	NGREast	NGRNor
36	Baas	da	HU	5304	8519
723	Baa o Andi Geo		HU	52681	85350
726	Baa o da Groin		HU	53364	85143
895	Baas o Hog		HU	44229	31194
905	Baa o Ollisgarth		HU	44674	30823
1165	Baas o Möörin		HU	22552	47202
1170	Baa o da Voe		HU	23959	47273
2584	Baa o da Lother	da	HU	36167	77969
2614	Baa o Gluss Ayre		HU	37362	77173
2650	Bonar		HU	36180	73279
3026	Rossa Baa		HP	59057	00881
3027	Frasers Baa		HU	58309	99605
3028	Gurda Baa		HU	57804	99328
3097	Plook	da	HU	54059	89642
3194	Sandy Baa		HU	51281	91548
3215	Lackie Baa		HU	51693	90970
3269	Ruggs	da	HP	54249	05158
3299	Frigga	da	HP	54029	05398
3343	Baa o Markamut		HU	53577	92416
3541	Trussa Baa		HU	67357	70964
3563	Bjurga Baas		HU	67462	72292
3654	Baa o Gunnister		HU	29834	74036
3942	Clavie Baas	da	HU	24910	78411
3952	Vallins Baa	da	HU	23881	77418
3955	Bruckleens Baa	da	HU	23148	77275
3991	Cod Baa	da	HU	21398	76613
4008	Dale Baa	da	HU	20953	77370
4032	Dale Baas		HU	22729	80440
4062	Villans Baa		HU	23763	81777

GIS search for baas (© and database right Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Ltd (All rights reserved) Licence no NG00228)

There is immense scope for presenting and using the data. The base map can be linked to the detailed database and there is potential to link in old maps, aerial and site photographs, archive and printed source material and sound recordings. When new names are incorporated, a map is generated and taken back to the informants for checking the names and locations; any necessary amendments and additions are subsequently made to the database.

Fishing Meids

A parallel project has recorded Shetland's fishing meids in conjunction with the Trust's Shetland Biological Records Centre. Before the advent of navigation with radar and GPS, fishing grounds around Shetland were

located by taking the transect of two meids – each meid involves lining up two landmarks. Meids are significant both biologically and historically. In biological terms they are used to locate fishing grounds that yielded particular species of fish. Historically, many of the meid names are at risk of being lost; many features which cannot be seen from land are recorded from the sea and many place names having an alternative name in fishing terms, either a descriptive name (how it appears from the sea) or a taboo name (due to the superstition of not using certain words when in a boat).

We interviewed 16 retired fishermen to collect information on meids and the fishing grounds that they were used to locate. Information was gathered on place-names relating to meids and the wider coastline, and we amassed an oral history relating to the contemporary environment, fishing and culture. This yielded a detailed history of the halibut line, haddock line and seine net fishery with descriptions of the grounds, details of place-names and notable words and phrases.

Some place-names are forgotten on land, but preserved in meids. *Houlastongas* was the fishermen's name for the sound between the Holm o Skaw and Whalsay (from ON *holmr* m. 'a holm' and ON *stong* f. 'a pole').[7] *Burgidale* was an old name for the valley between Sumburgh Head and Mid Head, named after the fort once situated at Sumburgh Head (from ON *borg* f. 'fort' and *dalr* m. 'a dale, valley'). Today any structures seem to have been obliterated when the building of Sumburgh lighthouse commenced in 1819 and the name is now only preserved in the meid *Water in Burgidale* – seen from 13 miles east, the valley dips below the horizon giving the appearance of water in the dale.

From the recordings, transcripts were made and reports compiled covering each type of fishery and ground. Additionally, a database and GIS system allows us to plot the landmarks and grounds and linking it to the Place Names Database. The transcripts of the men's stories have been used to produce a book; *Water in Burgidale* by Charlie Simpson was

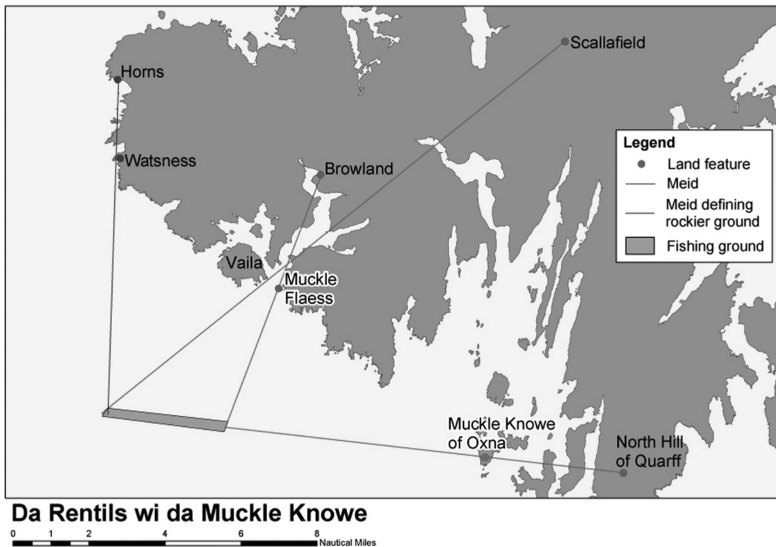
7 Jakobsen (1993, p. 104) notes that 'In Norway "Stang" (Eng. pole) occurs as a name of isles and peninsulas, and commonly as the name of a headland, in the compound "Stangnes". – Shetla. *Stonger*-holm *[ståṇgərom],* the name of a holm off Nesting.'

published in August 2010 and gives a detailed insight into the days of fishing before the use of navigational aids.

Conclusion

The future of the project looks really healthy. Our next major challenge is to make the maps and database more universally accessible through the internet. This will of course take time and money, but it will be pleasing to feel that we are using the latest technology to tell the whole story of what is going on in the landscape.

In over a hundred years of recording Shetland place-names, the importance of collecting place-names from oral sources has not diminished. Both Jakobsen in the 1890s and Stewart in the 1950s amassed vast collections of place-names by travelling throughout Shetland and talking to local residents. Jakobsen was gathering Shetland place-names



Meids map of Da Rentils wi da Muckle Knowe fishing ground

over a century ago at a time when there was little comparative work, but he employed the same basic techniques we use today – travelling around the isles talking to local folk about their way of life and local community. Fifty years later, in an era when the photocopier had just been invented but was not universally available, John Stewart chose to employ the method used in western Norway, sending questionnaires home with school children. Like Jakobsen he also travelled through Shetland talking to folk and verifying names. His achievements were immense, particularly in light of the fact that he was conducting all this work in his spare time and laboriously traced the OS maps rather than avail himself to the original maps, which might have been available through links established at the First Viking Congress held in Lerwick in 1950.

Today for the Shetland Place Names Project, the starting point remains the oral interview, but modern technology helps us collect and present Shetland place-names. Photocopied maps and aerial photographs and recording sheets are used, together with high quality digital recording equipment to capture local pronunciation and stories about the origin of names. Cameras and video cameras allow sites to be visually recorded, and GPS machines help pinpoint exact grid references in the field. Computer technology has enabled the development of a high quality detailed database to store the information and digital mapping ensures the accurate pinpointing of individual names, allowing the data to be presented in different ways to a range of potential users. Information can be shared worldwide through use of the internet. Taking forward Jakobsen and Stewart's legacy, the Shetland Place Names Project is putting the names they collected and explored linguistically into their geographic context. The base map is linked to a detailed database with potential to link in old maps, aerial photos, site photos and sound recordings.

Not only are we are charged with the important task of locating Shetland's place-names, but modern technology dictates our goal of making the information available to all interested parties worldwide and broadening the scope for future researchers, be it the local resident, the school child, the local historian, the official charged with producing maps or road signs, the historical geographer, the geologist, the archaeologist or the linguist.

Irish Links and Perspectives

Ríonach uí Ógáin

Professor Ríonach uí Ógáin is Director of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin. She has published numerous articles on traditional song and music and has lectured widely on the subject. Among her audio publications are the compact discs with texts Beauty an Oileáin: Music and Song of the Blasket Islands *and* Amhráin Shorcha Ní Ghuairim*. Her book* Immortal Dan: Daniel O'Connell in Irish Folk Tradition *draws on her PhD study. Her more recent publications include* Faoi Rothaí naGréine: Amhráin as Conamara a bhailigh Máirtín Ó Cadhain*. In 2003 she was awarded a Government of Ireland Senior Research Fellowship for her study 'The Diaries of Séamus Ennis', the celebrated musician who worked as a folk music collector with the Irish Folklore Commission. This was published in March 2007 –* Mise an Fear Ceoil: Séamus Ennis – Dialann Taistil 1942–1946*. It was awarded the best adult Irish-language book of the year and the English version,* Going to the well for water: The Séamus Ennis Field Diary 1942–1946 *(Cork University Press) was published in 2009. Her current research projects include work towards the publication of material related to the visit of Séamus Ennis to Scotland in 1946–1947. She is editor of* Béaloideas: The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society*.*

There is substantial evidence available regarding the physical, cultural and linguistic proximity of Gaelic Scotland and Ireland. The two countries have much in common in many ways but especially in the sphere of folk tradition. Shared connections, achievements and aspirations include the documenting of folklore, making a joint contribution to folkloristics, ongoing research and future co-operation and development.

The nineteenth century witnessed a surge of interest in oral tales and names and influences such as the brothers Grimm and Thomas Crofton Croker spring to mind. Some of the earliest publications, which serve as an introduction to the folktales and folklore of Scotland, are John Francis Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* that first appeared in 1860. Here, it is stated that Campbell of Islay travelled to the Isle of Man and lowland Scotland in his search for wonder tales. But he was more fortunate

in Ireland, it appears, and the fourth volume of Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, Orally Collected* contains a brief account of what he found in Ireland:

> *A lot of stories got from a carman in Waterford in 1861, included – 1. The water-cow and her progeny. 2. The Bansithe, which the narrator "had seen and heard." 3. A version of the man who travelled to learn shivering. 4. A haunted tower. 5. Treasure finding. 6. A spirit haunting a road and asking for a ride. 7. A lake spirit. 8. The man and dog in the subterranean passage, and many others were alluded to. It was evident that the Irish peasantry had the very same legends as the Scotch, and these were told in a different and very characteristic way.*
>
> *It is to be hoped that some Irishman will collect and publish the Irish popular tales. If it be honestly and faithfully done it will be the most amusing collection of all; but if any one polishes the language of Irish peasants, he will most certainly spoil it.*[1]

Campbell recognised the abundance of the material and hoped that the Irish oral tradition would be collected. This urgency to document a shared storytelling tradition was mutally recognised by the first Irish and Scottish folklorists. Campbell's approach and work were to influence Irish folklore scholars for generations, particularly Douglas Hyde as evidenced in his publication *Beside the Fire*.[2] Séamus Ó Duilearga, founder of the Irish Folklore Commission and first Professor of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin played an active part in the preparation of material from John Francis Campbell for publication and also in gathering information about him. Ó Duilearga corresponded for a number of years with J. G. McKay, the Scottish scholar. He wrote:

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1 Campbell, J.F., *Popular Tales of the West Highlands, Orally Collected*, vol. iv, Edinburgh 1862,435. See also Zimmermann, G. D., *The Irish Storyteller*, Dublin 2001, 296–297; Dorson, R., *The British Folklorists, a History*, London 1968, 399.

2 Hyde, D., *Beside the Fire: A Collection of Irish Gaelic Folk Stories,* London 1890.

> *I knew J. G. well and hold his name in affectionate remembrance. We corresponded for years (1929–42) and his many letters to me contain much valuable information on the Campbell of Islay mss [manuscripts] and on the difficulties he encountered in having his transcripts, translations and commentaries published. In that work I was privileged to help.*[3]

In Ireland, the limitations of the efforts by a few individuals to explore the folklore of a culture were evident and thus the Irish Folklore Commission came to be. The guiding principle of the Commission was a central archive fed by resident county collectors who would canvass their home areas, an idea implicit in the collecting technique of Campbell of Islay. McKay spent most of his leisure time in transcribing and studying the unpublished tales in the Campbell *Nachlass*. The transcription was given to Ó Duilearga. J.G. McKay knew Scots Gaelic and modern Irish well and was widely read in both languages.

The closeness of the two traditions continued to be emphasised and in a review of *More West Highland Tales* Ó Duilearga wrote:

> *The oral traditions of the people of Ireland and western Scotland form a natural unit … a community of tradition language and manners. Along these western coasts of Ireland and Scotland is still spoken a Celtic language in which is preserved the oldest written vernacular literature in Europe north and west of the Alps.*[4]

And he continued:

> *The oral traditions of Ireland and Scotland have so much in common that it is impossible to understand or to interpret them separately. In Ireland we have been engaged for over twenty years in the active collection of our oral literature and tradition both in Gaelic and in English.*[5]

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3 *Scottish Historical Review* 41 (1962), 146.

4 Ibid., 144.

5 National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin (NFC), Scottish Correspondence.

In 1926 the voluntary society An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann/The Folklore of Ireland Society was established with Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha (An Seabhac) as president and Ó Duilearga as editor of the journal *Béaloideas*. From its inception, the journal included material in Scots Gaelic.[6] The society was arguably the first step towards the establishment of the Irish Folklore Commission, now the National Folklore Collection.

One of the earliest contacts in this regard appears to be with Anna Nic Iain, a schoolteacher in Castlebay, in the island of Barra. We find a letter to Ó Duilearga, written in 1929, indicating that Anna must have stayed with his family in Dublin as she thanks them:

> *I feel quite ashamed that I never wrote to thank you and your mother for your hospitality and kindness to me when I was in Dublin last April … I was charmed with Dublin and the people I met there.*[7]

In the letter she also refers to meeting An Seabhac and his wife. Some of Anna's material was published in the second vol. of the journal *Béaloideas* and also in subsequent volumes.[8] With the establishment of the Irish Folklore Commission one of its first ventures was what is known as the Schools' Collection which took place in 1937–1938. This was a scheme by which folklore collecting was undertaken by senior pupils in primary schools under the guidance of teachers and parents and supported and encouraged by schools' inspectors and the Department of Education. As this scheme was getting off the ground, the possibilities of parallel collecting work in Scotland arose. As a schoolteacher, Anna was sent the booklet of guidelines for the teachers involved in the scheme. She was asked if she would find it possible to collect tales and other material in Barra through the school children or in any other way she could. She wrote:

> *I have just received the notebook, and goodness knows if I'll ever be able to fill it with unpublished stuff, for most of the stories I have heard*

6 See, for example, *Béaloideas* 2 (1930), 210 and *Béaloideas* 4 (1934), 46.
7 NFC Scottish Correspondence.
8 See footnote 6.

this winter are already recorded in Campbell's tales. Co-dhiu. I'll do what I can. I think I was telling you when I was in Dublin, about a peculiar song I heard with Ealasaid Eachainn [McKinnon], which seemed to me to be of Irish origin. I wrote it down from her, and am sending it in to you for I do not think it should go in the notebook. It is a lament for one Seathain, son of the king of Conway. There are many lines which I think may be irrelevant, but I noted them all and pencilled in a translation. It is sung very slowly – verse line and chorus line – alternately and it makes a right dirge. Let me know if it is of any interest. She knows nothing of the story of the song, except that she learned it from her mother, who told her it was a marbh-rann, lament or death-croon.[9]

One example of a tale contributed by Anna, or 'Miss Johnson', as she was known, in 1930 was *'Sgeulachd a Ghamhna Dhuinn'* where the English translation of the tale is included line by line under the Gaidhlig text.[10] In the context of the National Folklore Collection, this appears to be a somewhat unusual approach, where material is written either in Irish or in English. Correspondence with Anna and with other interested people, continued over the years and connections were maintained. Through the offices of the Irish Folklore Commission, Anna also met storytellers in different parts of Ireland. In one letter, following a visit to Ireland, she wrote:

In every case where we visited older people, we could understand their Gaelic, and they a little of ours. We rooted out Micheál Bán at Baile an Sceilg and he and I cracked proverbs and riddles at one another, and found that we had many in common.[11]

Ó Duilearga viewed Irish folklore in the context of world folklore. His emphasis on the Scandinavian connection comes to light together with

9 NFC 182:288.
10 NFC 102:309–343.
11 NFC Scottish Correspondence.

the Scottish/Irish linkage also. While working with Scandinavian scholars he included his Scottish connections. One person advised by Ó Duilearga to visit Ealasaid Eachainn (McKinnon) was Carl Borgström, a Norwegian. As Ó Duilearga wrote, Borgström was a pupil of Prof. Marstrander of Oslo and came as an:

> *… exchange student to TCD [Trinity College Dublin] about 1931–1932. I got to know him fairly well. At my suggestion he went to Baile an Sceilg, Co. Kerry and later to Dún Chaoin. I arranged for his visit to Barra also, and I prevailed on him to record tales there. Some of these tales he took down from an old woman I knew there in 1919 – Ealasaid McKinnon.*[12]

Borgström followed the advice and visited Barra. He was later to write on the dialects of Barra and of the Outer Hebrides.[13]

But the Irish Folklore Commission's emphasis in Scotland was on the urgency of collecting material in Scots Gaelic. Before the establishment of the Commission a small but significant collection of around 180 pages was collected in the form of a manuscript of tales brought together at the request of Séamus Ó Duilearga through, as Ó Duilearga wrote, "*the kindness of my friend Dr D.J. MacLeoid, M.M.I.S., Inverness 1931"*.[14] The collection was made by the pupils of Sgoil MhicNeacail/The Nicolson Institute in Stornoway. This may well have been seen by Ó Duilearga as a forerunner to the possibility of a Schools' Collection and he may have envisaged a similar collecting scheme in the schools in Scotland. The Nicolson Institute material consists mostly of ghost stories and a great deal of local history. The teacher in the school, Mr A. Urquhart, mentions that the pupils of Class V understood that 'one side of the paper' meant the translation on the other so that stories were given in Scots Gaelic and in English.

Among those who contributed material to the Irish Folklore Institute, forerunner to the Commission, was Donald MacDonald, a student of

12 NFC 102:345.

13 Borgström, C., *The Dialect of Barra in the Outer Hebrides,* Oslo 1935.

14 NFC 490: 1–180.

Glasgow University who collected riddles and other material in the island of Eriskay in 1933 and forwarded the collection to the Irish Folklore Institute.[15] His '*Tomhaseachan*' and accompanying '*Freagairt*' contained over fifty riddles on all kinds of subjects. He listed the riddles in alphabetical order according to the first word.[16]

With such strong ties it is not possible to comment on all the relationships that occurred between Ireland and Scotland in relation to folklore. It may be sufficient at this point to mention a few of the bodies with which the Commission worked so closely. Hundreds of letters exist demonstrating correspondence with the Scottish National Dictionary, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh University Departments including Geology and Law, Inverness County Council, Comunn Gaidhlig Inbhirnis. The University of Aberdeen, The National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh, Comunn na Clarsaich and the Guild of Catholic Teachers in the west of Scotland.

In 1943 while concentrating on the future work and organisation of the Commission the desirability of extending the work of the Commission to western Scotland was emphasised.[17] In 1945 the matter was broached with Taoiseach Éamon de Valera and the Minister for Education in a memorandum, some of which reads as follows:

> *The oral traditions of Ireland and those of Gaelic Scotland form a natural unity; it is impossible fully to study or understand either without the other. For the student of Irish Gaelic tradition the oral tradition and seanchas of Argyll and the Hebrides is as important as that of Cork and the Aran islands.*[18]

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15 For an account of the Irish Folklore Institute see Ó Catháin, S., 'Institiúid Bhéaloideas Éireann (1930–1935)' in *Béaloideas* (2005) 85–110; Briody, M., *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970 – History, ideology, methodology,* Helsinki 2007, 97–99.

16 NFC 131:151–167. See also NFC 1246:1–635 which contains narrative material collected by Donald MacDonald.

17 Briody, M., *op.cit.,* 299–309.

18 Ibid., 303.

As Micheál Briody also wrote in his history of the Irish Folklore Commission:

> *Nevertheless the Commission's proposals to extend its field of operations to western Scotland did not meet with such ready approval in the Department of Education.*[19]

Proinsias Ó Dufaigh of the Department of Education dismissed the idea out of hand and wrote:

> *I think the suggestion is so impractical that it need not be seriously considered.*[20]

Little could be achieved, in any event, until after the war. The first mention of progress appears in the Irish Folklore Commission report of 26th January 1945. The report mentions that the Commission wished to employ Calum MacGilleathain on a temporary basis to examine the Commission's published holdings in Scots Gaelic and to index their folklore content. Calum was also to examine and extract similar material held in other libraries in Dublin. Calum had previously worked as a collector for the Commission in Conamara. He began indexing folklore material in Scots Gaelic on 19th March, 1945 and was sent on a trial run to Scotland from 6th December, 1945 until 18th February, 1946 to assess the situation. Calum believed that the folklore of Ireland and Gaelic Scotland was so close that it should be treated as a unit. Thus, he also believed that the collecting of this material should be a single undertaking.

In the employment of the Irish Folklore Commission, Calum began collecting in Scotland in June 1946 and wrote back to Dublin of the great willingness of people to contribute material and of the warm welcome he received everywhere. From one of his prime informants of Beinn nam Fadhla, he recorded in 1949 the longest folktale ever recorded in Scots Gaelic – '*Alastar mac a' Cheird'* (Alastar, son of the caird).[21] This tale came

19 Ibid., 300.

20 Ibid., 301.

21 http://www.celtscot.ed.ac.uk/calum-maclean/about/. Accessed 16.01.2012.

to 58,000 words. In the four-and-a-half years he worked as collector in Scotland for the Irish Folklore Commission, he collected material to fill eighteen large volumes of folklore amounting to around ten thousand pages of material. News of the Commission's collecting work in Scotland appeared in the *Sunday Express* in 1948. The article reads:

> *Fairies, giants and ghosts that have lived for almost 70 years on the island of Benbecula in the Outer Hebrides with Mr Angus MacMillan are being rounded up and inspected by the Irish Folklore Commission. The Commission heard that Mr MacMillan, 74-year old crofter had a great knowledge of folk tales. They took a dictaphone to his home to record them. Night after night, in elegant Gaelic, the old man spoke into the recording machine. One of his tales, filling 31 records, lasted four nights at the rate of four-and-a-half hours per night. Mr MacMillan has now completed 600 records and is halfway through his repertoire of 40 stories.*[22]

The note detailing the source of the newspaper cutting is in the handwriting of Seán Ó Súílleabháin, the Commission's archivist, and illustrates ongoing involvement between the Commission's head office and Calum's fieldwork. Members of the Irish Folklore Commission sometimes made suggestions in relation to Calum's work in Scotland and we find, for example, that one member, Fionán Mac Coluim, suggested that Calum should try to collect old prayers, charms and religious songs such as those published in *Carmina Gadelica* to see if they were still part of the living tradition. [23]

The island of Canna and Canna House assume a particular significance in relation to Irish-Scottish connections. In January 1937, John Lorne Campbell acquired an Ediphone recording machine while he and Margaret Fay Shaw, his wife, were living on the island of Barra. By this time, both of them had been, for a number of years, collectors of folklore and more especially of folksong. By the end of July 1937, they had recorded almost

22 *The Sunday Express* 30.5.1948.

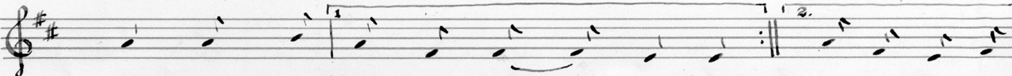
23 Minutes of the Irish Folklore Commission 25.06.1948, 412; 29.10.1948, 413.

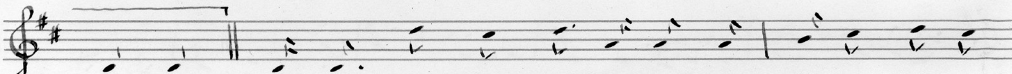
two hundred songs and stories. They subsequently visited Cape Breton where they made cylinder recordings of emigrants from Barra and Uibhist a Deas. In January 1938, they returned home to Scotland bringing with them a Presto disc-recording machine. Campbell stated that the first electrical recording of traditional Gaelic songs was done on the Isle of Barra in February and March that year.[24] That same year, the couple bought the island of Canna. The transfer to Canna House caused major upheaval in their lives and the song recordings needed attention. As Campbell said "*the words were little trouble, they had been taken down in the field*."[25] However, "*transcribing tunes was too time-consuming to think of*." Campbell described his concern for the survival of their recorded material and described his solution to the problem:

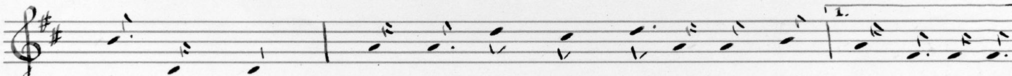
> *Ediphone cylinders are apt to deteriorate in storage, being attacked by mould, resulting in scratchy and unpleasant reproduction of sound. By 1946 the situation was getting desperate, and an appeal for help in transcribing the tunes was made to the Irish Folklore Commission … which was well aware of the interest of the Gaelic tradition of South Uist and Barra. The late Professor Delargy, head of the Commission, very kindly responded by sending the late Séamus Ennis, the Commission's musical transcriber, to Canna, along with Dr Calum I. MacLean the well-known folktale collector, then working for the Commission, subsequently for the School of Scottish Studies …*[26]

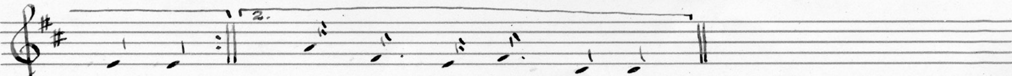
Séamus Ennis was in his early twenties when he joined the Irish Folklore Commission in 1942 as a full-time collector of music and song. Although probably best known as a piper, he proved to be a collector *par excellence.* He departed from the Commission in 1947 to take up a position with Radio Éireann. In the course of these five years with the Commission, he travelled much of Ireland, recording, with pen and paper for the most part, the music and song traditions of musicians and singers for whom

24 Campbell, J.L., *Songs Remembered in Exile,* Aberdeen 1990, 3.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 4.









Transcription by Séamus Ennis of 'Cailleach Liath Ratharsair' from Aonghus Eachainn MacDhomhnaill. (c.83) Canna, 1946 (National Folklore Collection, UCD)

music and song were a primary pastime. Most of his collecting work was done through Irish and the bulk of his harvest is therefore also in Irish. He travelled largely by train, bus and bicycle and sometimes by boat when he visited the small islands off the west and north-west coasts of Ireland.[27] On joining the Irish Folklore Commission, his first task was to transcribe music and song from Ediphone cylinders that were held in the Commission's offices and were hitherto untranscribed. Thus, his journey to Canna and to other parts of Scotland was to prove, for the most part, an extension of the work he had already done in Ireland.

From mid-November 1946 until the end of March 1947, Ennis spent four-and-a-half months in Scotland, mostly in the Outer Hebrides, working for the Irish Folklore Commission both as transcriber and collector. Throughout his Scottish visit, Ennis remained in constant communication with the staff of the Irish Folklore Commission, which was located at the time at University College Dublin, Earlsfort Terrace. He wrote on a regular basis to Seán Ó Súilleabháin and somewhat less frequently to Séamus Ó Duilearga and other staff members and they replied. This correspondence between Ennis and the Commission documents many aspects of his Scottish experience. The correspondence helps to reconstruct his visit and also provides an insight into the life of a full-time collector. By mid-November Ennis had settled in to Canna House and begun the transcription work. It had also been suggested that he should collect music and songs in Barra and in other islands on behalf of the Irish Folklore Commission.

When writing to the Dublin office, Ennis wrote in Irish for the most part to Seán Ó Súilleabháin and in English to Séamus Ó Duilearga. Occasionally he wrote in the Scottish Gaelic orthography as opposed to that of Irish, which had been the norm in his letters during his collecting period in Ireland. Ennis had only spent about a fortnight in Canna when he was joined by Calum MacGilleathain with whom he was already

27 For a brief account of Ennis' period with the Commission see uí Ógáin, R., 'A Job with no Clock: Séamus Ennis and the Irish Folklore Commission' *The Journal of Music in Ireland* vol. 6 no. 1 January – February 2006, Dublin 10–15.

acquainted. In Canna and throughout Ennis' Scottish trip, they were to work together. In early December Ennis wrote that Calum had been working with an old man in Canna.[28] Ennis had brought his pipes and both he and Calum were to visit the old man together. Also in early December, Ennis and the Campbells visited Uibhist a Deas where Ennis found all the men were pipers. Ennis brought his own pipes along. Here Ennis said he heard a musical tradition he had not previously encountered that was called '*canntaireachd*' and which he described in a letter to Ó Duilearga as "*a developed form of our lilting*".[29] He wrote that it was very fine indeed.[30]

The two collectors spent Christmas in Canna. They then journeyed to Ratharsair where they spent the New Year and Ennis met members of Calum's family and wrote songs and music from them. Ennis and Calum journeyed onwards to Barra. By early February, the two collectors had settled in to life in Barra where Ennis met with the daughter of Ruairi Iain Bhain, a singer, whom Campbell had recorded in 1938 and who had died in 1942. Through his transcription work in Canna, Ennis had encountered Ruairí's singing and when in Barra he wrote: "*I sang them two of the old man's songs they cried, and swore they would think I was he, had they not seen different, for they loved his singing*." Ennis also observed that the old-style singing was practically a thing of the past in Barra.[31] He found the people of Barra very friendly and wrote that it was just like Ireland, apart from the language which he found very different to Irish.[32] While waiting two weeks for recording discs to arrive, a delay over which he expressed some concern, he spent much of his time learning to speak Scots Gaelic. In all, he spent seven weeks in Barra.[33]

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28 Ennis wrote tunes from this man, Angus MacDonald (83) or 'Aonghus Eachainn' and from his son, Eachainn (55). John Lorne Campbell described 'Aonghus Eachainn' as the last Canna *seanchaidh.* In *Songs Remembered in Exile* (p.3) Campbell said that he and his wife had the chance to make an occasional disc recording of him.

29 NFC Ennis Correspondence (8.12.1946).

30 NFC Ennis Correspondence (3.12.1946).

31 NFC Ennis Correspondence (5.02.1947).

32 Ibid.

33 NFC Ennis Correspondence (19.03.1947).

The two collectors went to Uibhist and Ennis wrote that he found people in Uibhist were enthusiastic in relation to the uilleann pipes. It was not all plain sailing for Ennis, however, and he encountered some difficulties, not least the bad weather. Travel was slow and supplies sometimes difficult to come by. While he and Calum were waiting for supplies in Barra for example, telegrams were sent back and forth arranging for recording discs to be sent so they must have been relieved to receive a telegram from Caoimhín Ó Danachair of the Irish Folklore Commission – "*30 ten inch discs sent you from London*".[34]

Ennis wrote in relation to his work: "It does not keep up to the pace possible to me with Irish material, but then it was slow going in the initial stages due to my complete ignorance of the language."[35] During his time in Scotland Ennis made one-hundred-and-forty-seven transcriptions and eighty-five recordings.

Much of the information in relation to the period Ennis spent in Scotland is based on correspondence as Ennis appears not to have kept a diary during his Scottish period. Calum's diary sheds more light on the period and doubtless more may be gleaned in the future in the Canna archive. Some of Ennis' work in Scotland has already been illustrated in the book *Songs Remembered in Exile*.[36] In the report Ennis submitted to the Commission detailing his trip to Scotland from the ninth of November 1946 until the thirty-first of March 1947 he said that in addition to his transcription of items of music from the cylinders of John Lorne Campbell, he had also travelled Morar, Eigg, Canna, Barra, Uibhist and Ratharsair where he collected seventy-four items in the course of the journey and learned Scots Gaelic. Ennis' Scottish experience underlines the foresight of the Irish Folklore Commission in relation to collecting traditional song and the Commission's willingness to 'lend' a staff member to Campbell. This idea is further underlined by the fact that Ennis was already acquainted with and had worked alongside Calum MacGilleathain in Ireland. His work in Scotland gave Ennis a firsthand experience of an introduction to

34 NFC Ennis Correspondence (29.01.1947).
35 NFC Ennis Correspondence (19.03.1947).
36 Campbell, J.L., *op.cit.,* 1990.

Scottish Gaelic and to its song tradition. Ennis' musical ear and gift for the speedy acquisition of language contributed to his working trip and were also key factors in developing further links across An Mhaoil.

Others forged these links and found much to be recorded in Gaelic Scotland. For example, between the years 1955 and 1965, the Irish writer and scholar, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, visited the Hebrides and made a number of sound recordings. My own research has brought me to follow Séamus Ennis' journey, and indeed that of Calum, as he accompanied Ennis for most of the trip, and to ascertain if memories, or inherited memories exist in relation to their visit. One of my first steps was to identify relevant photographic material in the National Folklore Collection. This

Flora Mac Neill, Barra, c. 1947 (National Folklore Collection, UCD)

included some unidentified images of Barra people for the most part and were taken it seems by George Scott Moncrieff at the request of Calum MacGilleathain and Ennis. On the thirtieth of March 1947 Calum met Scott Moncrieff in Eigg and wrote in his diary that he and Ennis arranged that the photographs should be taken. Given that it is sixty-five years since Ennis first visited the Hebrides, it was hardly likely that many would have first hand recall of that visit. I was very fortunate, however, in meeting with Flora MacNeill, who shared some of her memories of Ennis' visit to Barra with me. As she worked with the Post Office in Barra in the 1940s, she still remembers the relief and excitement associated with the delay in the arrival of the discs.

During their time in Barra, Ennis and Calum joined forces in their collecting work and visited and recorded storytellers such as Seamus Iain Ghunnairigh, Séamus Mac Fhionghuin, Bagh o Thuath, the first storyteller from whom Calum collected in Scotland. Mairi Ceit Nic Fhionghuin, a former teacher in Barra introduced me to Charlie Mac Neill, the grandson of Seamus Iain Ghunnairigh and Charlie remembered people coming to collect from his grandfather. Although Mairi Céit was not born until after Ennis' visit to Barra for the Irish Folklore Commission, she showed me the house in which Calum and Ennis stayed and talked of her memories of Ennis and Calum when they visited Barra in the 1950s. Recent fieldwork and the correspondence with the Irish Folklore Commission have been to date the main sources to gain insight and information regarding the Scottish trip. Other sources merit thorough examination such as the Calum MacGilleathain collection in the National Folklore Collection, Dublin and the Campbell archive in Canna.

Séamus Ó Duilearga also maintained his connections with collecting work in Scotland. In 1947 for example, he gave talks at Glasgow University and at training colleges to around fifty student teachers whom he urged to collect folklore through the schools. He also conducted negotiations with interested parties towards the establishment of what was to become the School of Scottish Studies. His aim was to see the establishment of an organisation that would take over responsibility for the collecting of folklore in Scotland. As he wrote:

> *Through the cordial co-operation of Scottish cultural associations and of many highland and lowland scholars, we are privileged to assist in the collection of Scottish oral tradition and we have agreed to continue this work until the time comes when a national archive of Scottish tradition will take over the work.*[37]

In December 1947 Ó Duilearga was in a position to tell the Department of Finance in Ireland that a Folklore Institute was to be set up in Scotland but he felt it was important to keep Calum MacGilleathain as a collector for the Commission until this institute was in operation. In Scotland in 1947 the voluntary society – Cumann Bealaithris na h-Alba/The Folklore Institute of Scotland was established, with John Lorne Campbell as president. The Society's aims were to stimulate interest in folklore, especially in material in Scots Gaelic, to preserve the collection and to make it available for research and publication. Thus it appears that the aims were parallel to those of An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann/The Folklore of Ireland Society.

The minutes of the Irish Folklore Commission for the twenty-fifth of June 1948 document a visit to the Commission by the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland the previous month. It was reported that they were very pleased with the collection and expressed their appreciation of the urgency of collecting folklore in Scotland. Examples from the Commission correspondence files underline continued involvement at formal and less formal levels.

Ireland, Sweden and Scotland were also linked in the quest for folklore and Ó Duilearga organised that Calum should travel with Åke Campbell, the Swedish ethnologist who was going from Ireland to the Hebrides to continue surveying work he had undertaken in Ireland. Ó Duilearga wrote that Calum would be very helpful to Campbell but would also learn a great deal from him.

Of course, the highpoint in relation to Ireland and the Collection of folklore in Scotland came with the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies. Séamus Ó Duilearga was especially pleased. The School

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37 NFC: note with notebooks for collection of oral tradition 1947.

of Scottish Studies took, in many ways, the model of the Irish Folklore Commission as its foundational principle. Following the establishment of the School Ó Duilearga, at the request of the Scottish authorities, spent five days in Edinburgh as advisor in February 1951. It is also important to mention that Ó Duilearga's obituary in the *London Times* of the fourth of July 1980 included recognition of his role in the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies. The 1950s witnessed developments in terms of technology and recording equipment and earlier shared involvement in folklore collecting continued. One example of shared expertise was when Leo Corduff, sound archivist with the Irish Folklore Commission, visited the University in Edinburgh in the mid 1950s to view, and learn about, the tape recording machine which had just arrived there. The Commission minutes note that he spent a week there at the Linguistics Department and that he brought back a great deal of information that would be very useful in relation to the work of the Commission.[38]

The establishment of the School meant that collected, archived material could be consulted and the shared traditions studied. In 1958 at a meeting of the Irish Folklore Commission the director read a letter from John Lorne Campbell seeking permission to publish music Campbell had recorded in 1947. Ennis had transcribed the music. The Commission decided to allow this but subject to Ennis' agreement. This underlines some of the challenges which face the two collections today – questions of permissions, copyright, intellectual ownership and dissemination.

In 1965 Seán Ó Súilleabháin spent a week in the School of Scottish Studies where he gave advice and instruction to Alan Bruford who had recently been appointed archivist. Bruford was to come to visit the Irish Folklore Commission for a week, later that year, to receive further experience. More recent events have continued forging connections and enhanced ongoing co-operation between folklorists, singers and musicians both sides of An Mhaoil illustrating the importance of mutual support. For example, the year 1985 saw the fiftieth anniversary of the

38 Minutes of the Irish Folklore Commission 16.03.1953, 527.

establishment of the Irish Folklore Commission for which an exhibition of photographs entitled '*I gCuimhne na nDaoine*' was among the events organised. The exhibition contained numerous images taken by Caoimhín Ó Danachair and by others in Scotland with particular reference to vernacular architecture. This exhibition is now available on-line through the website of the National Folklore Collection. A shared pride and sense of joint achievement were expressed in the tunes composed by the School of Scottish Studies to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary.

A few years later, in October 1988, a symposium arranged by the Department of Irish Folklore entitled *'The Supernatural in Irish and Scottish Migratory Legends'* was held at University College Dublin. In his welcoming address, Professor Bo Almqvist said that the symposium was devoted to migratory belief fabulates in Irish and Scottish tradition. The symposium highlighted the richness and unique quality of the sources in the Irish and Scottish archives and printed collections. In addition, as Bo Almqvist said in his welcoming address:

> *Furthermore we will aim towards the solution of such problems as establishing the canon of these legends in Ireland and Scotland and the distribution of individual legends and their respective popularity or rarity in both countries. In such a comparative perspective the questions of form, structure and function of these legends will also be tackled. It is hoped that this symposium will be a first step towards furthering and co-ordinating research into legends of this kind in Ireland and Scotland.*[39]

A number of scholars came from Scotland and participated in the symposium. It might be appropriate to mention here the importance of shared research in our tradition and how contributions by Scottish scholars have expanded the horizons of Irish folklore studies.

So what of the future and of ongoing contact and co-operation between our respective institutions and collections? Despite the economic recession

39 See printed programme to Symposium, 3.

and cutbacks in human and financial resources, the core shared values and emphasis remain. Much has changed since the time when Flora MacNeill relayed the exciting news that recording discs had finally arrived in Barra. The importance of ongoing fieldwork today cannot be overstressed. Fieldwork is the core process by which tradition is documented for inclusion in an archive of vernacular material. Looking back at the work undertaken by fieldworkers on both sides of Sruth na Maoile we have reason to be grateful – not only to those who had the foresight and determination to oversee the collection and preservation work but to those who collected and contributed folklore. The National Folklore Collection has reason to be grateful to the School of Scottish Studies and to Dr John Shaw in particular for spearheading the Calum Maclean Catalogue Project. The Online Catalogue Project is hosted by the University of Edinburgh and partnered with the National Folklore Collection. It has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and makes 13,000 manuscript pages, the result of Calum MacGilleathain's fieldwork in Scotland, available in digitised, searchable database form.

Funding through Colm Cille underlines goodwill towards forging links between Irish and Scots Gaelic and funding has just been allocated by Colm Cille towards digitising the Scots Gaelic sound recordings in the National Folklore Collection made by Séamus Ennis and Calum MacGilleathain in the 1940s. At some future point the recordings in Irish and English, describing experiences of seasonal workers in Scotland who came from Galway, Mayo and Donegal might be similarily digitised and made available. Endless possibilities exist in relation to comparative and joint research. Comparative research on repertoire and style, for example, springs to mind. Investigation into matters of language and lore offers numerous research topics for the future.

A symposium or conference of postgraduate students and early career scholars to be held on a regular basis would stimulate further interest, contact and research. A fresh look at earlier Scottish material in the National Folklore Collection will prove fruitful towards creating an awareness of the importance of previous fieldwork. It will also raise the profile of the Scottish-Irish connection and promote further initiatives in this sphere.

A radio programme was broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland in connection with some of the material mentioned earlier. The introductory page reads:

> *I trust you find some grains of wheat among all this chaff. Too many of them, I am afraid, touch too closely on comparatively modern local history. Some of the Class V lot, unfortunately, concluded that, 'one side of the paper', meant 'the translation on the other' but if you consider any of them of value I can get other copies at any time.*[40]

The radio programme focused on these essays submitted by the pupils of the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway. A number of people are involved in the furthering of Irish-Scottish relations in terms of folklore, language and culture. Prof. Seosamh Watson is one example of such involvement. The fruits of some of his work appeared as a first-hand Gaelic account of the traditional life of a twentieth century east-coast fishing community, *Saoghal Bana-mharaiche*.[41] He also collected from the traveller informant, Lindsay Williamson. He was appointed Research Fellow with the School of Scottish Studies and embarked on fieldwork in Nova Scotia and Ontario.

Beyond the Hebrides and Gaelic-speaking Scotland, links have existed for decades with other island and mainland Scottish communities. Séamus Ó Duilearga who was largely responsible for the establishment of the Irish Folklore Commission and who seized every opportunity possible to ensure the founding of a sister institute in Scotland visited Shetland in 1950. He was working in somewhat similar circumstances, that we face today, in relation to the dire economic situation but his diary highlights perhaps some of the most dramatic changes in terms of communication and technological advances that have occurred in the last 60 years. In July 1950 he visited Shetland to attend the Viking Congress. He sailed from Aberdeen late at night – his diary entry reads:

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40 NFC 490:3.

41 Watson, S., *Saoghal Bana-mharaiche: Cunntas Beul-aithris Mu Bheatha Muinntir an Iasgaich Ann am Machair Rois,* Perthshire 2007.

> *… to bed at 11.30 after watching British Home Fleet at close quarters – air-carriers and destroyers at exercise. Fine night and sunset. 200 miles voyage to Shetland.*
>
> *Sailed into Lerwick at 7.30 am. Buses to Bruce Hostel where we settled down. Walk through town. 12.30 Civic lunch in Hostel, introductions all round. In evening hired bicycle, got fishing permit and cycled to Tingwall Lake. En route asked way – man was from Rosses. No. of Donegal people here for fishing.*
>
> *Sunday – to mass at 11 with Scott-Moncrieff etc. Fr Collins from Glasgow said Mass. Only 2 Shetland Catholics. Congregation from Rosses. I had chat in Irish with a McCool from Loch an Iúir.*
>
> *McIntosh of Edinburgh had arrived and I was very glad to see him. 14 July I spoke to a paper by a Mr John Nicholson on Shetland Folktales in which I urged collection of island's traditions. I went to see John Graham MA teacher at Lerwick Sec. School, a former pupil of McIntosh. I am trying to get someone from Shetland to be trained in Sweden, and so I gave all the encouragement I could to young Graham.*[42]

The spirit of a shared tradition and vision between folklorists and folklore institutes in Ireland and in Scotland continues. When the School of Scottish Studies celebrates its hundredth anniversary it is hoped that we will have continued to work closely together in the intervening years and that folklorists in Ireland will make their contribution.

42 NFC Ó Duilearga papers, courtesy Caitríona Miles.

The Significance of the Work and Collections of the School of Scottish Studies from a Scandinavian Perspective

Terry Gunnell

Terry Gunnell is Professor of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland, where he has been working full-time since 1998. In addition to writing The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia *(1995), based on his PhD thesis at the University of Leeds, and editing* Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area *(2007),* Legends and Landscape *(2008), and* The Nordic Apocalypse: Approaches to Vǫluspá and Nordic Days of Judgement *(2013, with Annette Lassen), he has written a range of articles on both Old Nordic religions, and the folk legends, festivals, and popular drama of the Nordic countries and the North Atlantic Islands, including Shetland (where he conducted field work into guising traditions in 2000, 2001 and 2011). His most recent work has focused on the wide field of performance (with regard to all of the above areas of study), something that grew out of his earlier studies in drama and theatre arts.*

Folklore as a subject grew out of national romanticism in the mid-nineteenth century, closely related to Herder's search for the *volksgeist*, the national spirit that he and others believed could be found in the comparatively uncorrupted poetry of the people of the countryside (see further Leersen 2006). Similar ideas are found in the Grimms' original appeal of 1815, which hoped to find material that would help scholars understand the 'old and true origins' of German literature, history and language.[1] A similar focus was expressed in the Grimms' introduction to their influential *Deutsche Sagen* from 1816, which clearly states the

1 "… ohne es genauer zu erforschen, vermögen weder unsere poesie, noch geschichte, noch sprache in ihren alten und wahrhaftligen ursprungen ernstlich verstanden zu warden" (Grimm 1864–1890: VII, 593).

essentially national value that the brothers saw in the material they were collecting, which is recommended first and foremost to:

> *… devotees of German poesie, history and language and hope that it will be welcome to all as purely German fare. For it is our firm belief that nothing is as edifying or as likely to bring more joy than the products of the Fatherland. Indeed, an apparently insignificant, self-occasioning discovery and endeavour in the study of our own indigenous culture can in the end bring more fruit than the most brilliant discovery and cultivation of foreign fields* (Grimm 1981: I, 11).[2]

As the Grimm ripples travelled north, similar 'national' ideas began appearing in the titles, formats and contents of the succeeding collections of folk tales which were coming off the presses in northern Europe: Thiele's *Danske Folksagn* from 1818–1823; Crofton Croker's *Fairy Tales and Legends of the South of Ireland* from 1825; Samuel Lover's *Legends and Stories of Ireland* from 1831; Andreas Faye's *Norske sagn* from 1833 and 1844; Asbjørnsen and Moe's *Norske Folkeeventyr* from 1841–1844; Robert Chambers' *Popular Rhymes, Fireside Stories and Amusements of Scotland* from 1842, George Stephens and Hylltén Cavallius' *Svenska Folk-Sagor og Æfventyr* from 1844; Asbjörnsen's *Norske Huldreeventyr og Folkesagn* from 1845–1848; V. V. Hammershaimb's *Færoiske sagn* (1846); and Magnús Grímsson and Jón Árnason's *Íslenzk æfintýri* from 1852, the introduction of which is still underlining how:

> *these folk tales are* the poetic creation of the nation[3] […] *They are the creation of the naivety that the nation experiences and experienced. In*

2 "… empfehlen unser Buch den Liebhabern deutscher Poesie, Geschichte un Sprache und hoffen, es werde ihnen allen, schon als lautere deutsche kost, willkomen sehn, im festen Glauben, dass nichts mehr auferbaue und grössere Freude bei sich habe als das Vaterländische. Ja, eine bedeutungslos sich anlassende Entdeckung und Bemühung in unserer einheimischen Wissenschaft kann leicht am Ende mehr Frucht bringen als die blendendste Bekanntwerdung und Andbauung des Fremden" (Grimm 1976: 17).

3 It might be noted that the word "*þjóðarinnar*" (lit. "of the nation") is used here, rather than *alþyðunnar* or *fólksins*, both of which would refer directly to "the people".

> *them we see both* the nation's *longing for history and the special feel that* the nation's *narratives tend to be veiled in … the folk tales are very important for the history of* our nation's *education* (my emphases).[4]

John Francis Campbell's key collection of Scottish folk tales, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* I-II, which appeared in 1860–1862, reflected many of the same national concerns.

Considering the reasons for this tsunami of folk-tale collection, it is worth bearing in mind that the countries mentioned above were all engaged in attempting to gain some degree of national independence or unity. The wave of folk tale collection was accompanied by the appearance of new national histories; new dictionaries; calls for national museums, national galleries, national theatres; and demands that artists, playwrights and writers should make use of the newly published folk materials to find motifs that reflected and summed up the national spirit. It is noteworthy that there are no English or French national collections of folklore during this period (see further Gunnell 2010; and forthcoming).

Nonetheless, by the time of the appearance of Campbell's *Popular Tales*, it was becoming clear that the various collections were not only helping people become aware of national differences, but also of the fact that numerous similarities existed in the material that had been collected in neighbouring countries (see further Gunnell 2010: 14–16). Such observations were encouraging the evolution of a new folkloristic approach. There was a growing awareness of the fact that the borders that early folklore collections had been highlighting were largely *created* borders, in other words frameworks, many of which were neither recognised nor truly understood by the people from whom the material was being collected. The broad picture had its values, but was rarely understood

4 "Þessi ævintýri eru *skáldskapur þjóðarinnar*. Þau eru búningur hinnar einföldu hugsunar, sem *þjóðin* lifir og hefur lifað í. Þar kemur *sögulöngun hennar* fram og hinn einkennilegi blær, sem frásögur hennar eru vanar að vera hjúpaðar í… Í þessu tilliti eru því ævintýrin harla markverð fyrir menntunarsögu *þjóðar* vorrar" (Jón Árnason and Magnús Grímsson, 1852: 3). (My italics).

by the majority of people in the countryside, who had no experience of the wider worldview offered by Google, Sky News or the World Wide Web, but mostly saw the world in terms of the valley they lived in, or the island they lived on, and the day to day travails of trying to survive the winter. In short, the 'national' folklore approach had obvious political value, but it largely ignored *local* identity, placing material from Unst, Uist, and the Borderlands together within the same sack. All of this had value with regard to identifying the fact that folklore spread and travelled, but it ignored another fact that *other* frameworks could be construed, containing, for example, material from Unst, Bergen, Reykjavík and Co. Mayo, which would reflect other cultural entities well understood by the local people, but less important for the politicians. The key feature that was becoming recognised was that folklore is not determined by purely political (or even linguistic) boundaries. It moves freely over time and space, *connecting* people in other ways than those decided by politicians. Indeed, as all Shetlanders and Orcadians know, even the sea cannot be seen as representing a borderline between cultures. Far from it: the sea is actually a main road which connects Shetland to Norway, Scotland, the Faroe Islands and Ireland, and when it comes down to it, for Shetlanders, Bergen is a great deal closer than London.

In short, by the time institutions like the Department of Irish Folklore and the School of Scottish Studies came into being in the twentieth century, while their institutional names underlined essentially national affiliation (for logical reasons), their activities were also firmly rooted in the newer ideas of international comparativism. In short, they were also well aware of their potential *international* role, which will form the main focus of this article. Nonetheless, in spite of the natural cultural associations with France which the Gaelic language and culture might have suggested, it is noteworthy that from the start, both departments set up very firm connections with the Nordic countries, and especially Sweden and Norway (see further the articles by Margaret Mackay and Cathlin Macaulay elsewhere in this volume). This needs some explanation.

In the case of Scotland, it might be said the sense of Nordic connections with Gaelic culture had been noted and fostered at an

early point by John Francis Campbell. Indeed, Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* had been directly inspired by Sir George Dasent's English translation of Asbjørnsen and Moe's collection of Norwegian folk tales, *Popular Tales from the Norse* (1858), the introduction of which (by Dasent) had underlined the need for similar collections to be made in the British Isles (see further Gunnell 2010: 17–21). Dasent, who had also translated Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda* and *Njáls saga* from Icelandic, was particularly attracted to Scandinavian culture. Like Rasmus Rask, the Grimms and Jørgen Moe before him, he was also attracted to the 'really big' picture in the shape of the Indo-European culture which many saw as lying behind the shared linguistic and narrative features that the new folklore collections were constantly revealing (see further Wawn 2000: 142–152). Dasent's introduction to *Popular Tales from the Norse* (like Moe's own earlier introduction) demonstrated that the international historical-geographic method of folk narrative analysis (which traced the development of folk narrative over time and space) was well on its way.[5]

In his introduction, Dasent had stressed that "*The first authentic history of a nation is the history of its tongue*" (1859: xix, echoed on xx); and with regard to this, underlined that English and Norwegian are "*nearly allied, both in vocabulary and construction*" (Dasent 1859: clx), the suggestion being that the Anglo-Saxon and Norse Indo-European elements live and thrive within the British as much as they do in the Norwegians. In both, he felt, one could spy the "*bold, outspoken, and humorous, in the* true *sense of humour. In the midst of every difficulty and danger arises that old Norse feeling of making the best of everything and keeping a good face to the foe*." […] Dasent adds, with regard to Asbjørnsen and Moe's folk tales: "*these*

5 It might be noted that in his earlier Preface to *Popular Rhymes, Fireside Stories and Amusements of Scotland* (1842), Robert Chambers was already noting that "In some instances, a remarkable resemblance is made out between rhymes prevalent over Scotland and others which exist in England and Germany", and encourages further comparative work to be carried out especially within those nations "containing a Teutonic population" (Chambers 1842: 3). For understandable linguistic reasons, nothing is said about Scandinavia at this point.

are tales of 'hempen homespuns', of Norske bonder*, who call a spade a spade, and who burn tallow, not wax …*" (Dasent 1859: cl–clii), and suggests to his readers that very similar tales could be found in Scotland. As he stresses:

> *The wonderful likeness which is shown between such tales as the '*Red Bull of Norway*' in Mr Chambers' collection, and Katie Woodencloak in these Norse Tales, is to be accounted for by no theory of the importation of this or that particular tale in later times from Norway, but by the fact that the Lowland Scots, among whom these tales were told, were lineal descendants of the Norsemen who had either seized the country in the Viking times, or had been driven into it across the Border after the Norman conquest* (Dasent 1859: cxlv–cl).

There was thus excellent logical reason for placing Scottish and Norwegian material side by side in folktale analysis.

John Francis Campbell went on to accompany Dasent on two trips to Iceland in August 1861, and July and August 1862. However, by this time, Campbell had already established his own Nordic networks. He made eleven trips to Scandinavia between 1849 and 1873, which had encouraged him to detect potential (if somewhat odd) links between the Sami language and Gaelic (Dorson 1968: 393–401; Olsen 2005; Gunnell 2009). He also had his own direct contact with Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen in Norway, among other things about the shared features of the heather ale folk legend Campbell had encountered in Scotland, and similar accounts found in Old Icelandic literature (Gunnell 2010: 21 and 33–36). It is nonetheless worth noting that when he came to Iceland in 1861 and 1862 (at precisely the same time he was putting the final touches to the first volumes of his folklore collection), Campbell seems to have made no contact with the main Icelandic collector of folklore, Jón Árnason, who was working overtime on assembling the first real collection of Icelandic folktales, inspired by the German scholar Konrad Maurer (Gunnell 2010). While in Iceland, rather than discussing folk tales, Campbell seems to have been spiritually preparing himself for his later work for the Coal

Commission.[6] In his book on the trip, *Frost and Fire: Natural Engines, Tool Marks and Chips with Sketches Taken at Home and Abroad by a Traveller* (1865), Campbell praises the island as being first and foremost a kind of "*Wolverhampton of the North*". For him, Iceland is a very large "*cinder heap*", but:

> *the lesson which it teaches is well worth the cost. Hecla may only be one large valve in a great caloric engine; but it is not too large to be seen, and it is well worth looking at.* […] *These twin giants, Fire and Frost, Heat and Cold, are as busy near Hecla as at Wolverhampton or Coatbridge, and their work is alike at home and abroad* (Campbell 1865: 2).

For John Francis Campbell, the values of Scandinavia were clearly many and varied.

Campbell may nonetheless be said to have set the tone and forged the academic folkloric connections between Scotland and Scandinavia which were later to be more firmly developed after the First World War, and particularly in the twenties and thirties when the work between the Irish and Swedish folklorists Séamus Ó Duilearga and Carl Wilhelm von Sydow led to von Sydow's colleague, Åke Campbell, joining the Swedish-trained Calum Maclean to carry out fieldwork into *clocháns* and shielings in the Hebrides in 1939 and 1948, on Ó Duilearga's advice (Bringéus 2008: 107–112).[7] As is noted in the articles by Margaret Mackay and Cailean Maclean elsewhere in this volume, this work led in turn to Åke Campbell meeting up with not only H. J. Rose and Robert Kerr at

6 Campbell became Secretary to the Mines Commission in 1863, and Secretary to the Coal Commission in 1866 (Dorson 1968).

7 It might be noted that even earlier than this the Norwegian ethnomusicologist and folk song collector O. M. Sandvik had carried out collection work during a very brief trip to Barra in September 1927, at the encouragement of Ó Duilearga and the Norwegian folklorist, Reidar Christiansen, who had his own interests in Celtic/Nordic connections: see Ó Catháin, forthcoming, and Christiansen 1959. Concerning Christiansen's own fieldwork in northern Scotland and the Hebrides in the 1920s, see Rogan 2012: 107–108.

the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society in Edinburgh,[8] but also John Lorne Campbell in Canna in June and July 1948 (Bringéus 2008: 111). However, before this point, when travelling home from Ireland in 1935, Campbell had taken part in another meeting with the society (with Rose and G. R. Gair among others) about the possibility of Scotland setting up its own archive (something von Sydow, Rose, Gair, Kerr and Campbell had previously proposed at the first meeting of the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in London in 1934) (Bringéus 2008: 91–92 and 118–123). There was also on-going talk about the possibility of an international conference of folklorists and ethnologists being held in Scotland in 1936, something which was seen as a means of encouraging the establishment of such a Scottish archive (Bringéus 2008: 119–122). As Campbell noted in a letter to the Danish folklorist, Hans Ellekilde in July 1935, cooperation between the Nordic countries and Scotland in forwarding such an institution would be fruitful in various ways, and not least as an answer to the way Germany was currently underlining the firmly nationalistic aspects of folklore:

Campbell writes:

> *In Scotland, one hopes (like in Ireland) to tighten the connections with the Nordic countries. Everyone in Ireland and Great Britain is now looking towards the Nordic area: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, the Faroes, Finland are the countries which are mostly considered. As a result of Germany's move away from the disciplined scholarly route and its reluctance for non-prejudiced international cooperation, people in western Europe are looking for better connections in the scholarly field. The North and Irish Sea appear to be kind of mid-point for a*

8 The society had been formed in 1934 as The Scottish Anthropological Society (becoming the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society in 1936). Prof. H. J. Rose was President, Kerr (of the Royal Scottish Museums) was Hon. Secretary and G. R. Gair (later Robert Gayre of Gayre) served as Hon. Editor: http://www.therai.org.uk/archives-and-manuscripts/archive-contents/scottish-anthropological-and-folklore-society-a109/ last accessed 21st January 2013.

> *circle of people closely related to Nordic culture, who need each other on the academic plane. I believe I spoke warmly and in some detail about the Danish folklore research at a meeting which was arranged in Edinburgh by the Anthropological Society which was discussing Duilearga's, von Sydow's and my plan for west and north European cooperation* (Bringéus 2008: 121).[9]

Elsewhere in this letter to Ellekilde, Campbell once again urges that the next International Folklore Conference in 1936 should take place in Edinburgh rather than in Lübeck, Germany, and that Denmark should also be actively involved in these moves, not only because of its ancient cultural connections to Britain, but also because of the value that the comparative material in Danish archives would have for folklore studies throughout Britain and Ireland (Bringéus 2008: 121–122). Similar ideas are reflected in various other letters that were going back and forth between Nordic and Irish folklorists during this period, all of which underline their joint desire for the establishment of a Scottish archive like that being developed in Dublin. They also underline the hope that Nordic folklorists had for continuing close cooperation between the Irish and Scottish archives and scholars in the Nordic countries (Bringéus 2008: 118–123).

The planned folklore conference in Edinburgh, which focused on archives and translation, was delayed until 1937 (and it is noteworthy that the Germans, highly offended at the rejection of Lübeck as a venue,

9 My translation. The original text (given in Bringéus' book) runs as follows: "Mann ville i Skottland (liksom i Irland) knyta förbindelseerna með Norden allt fastare. Hela Irland-Storbritannien söker sig nu mot Norden: Danmark, Sverige, Norge, Island, Faröarna, Finland voro nu de länder som närmast kommo i åtanke. Genom Tysklands avfall från den strängt vetenskapliga vägen och dess obenägenhet til fördomsfritt internationellt samarbete har man i Västeuropa måst se sig om efter vetenskapligt sett bättre förbindelser. Nordsjön-Västerhavet synes nu bli ett medelhav för en krets av nara belsläktade nordiska kulturfolk, som behöva varandra även på vetenskapens område. Jeg tror at jag talade mycket utförligt och varmt om dansk folkminnesforskning på det möte som anordnats i Edinburgh av Anthropological Society för att diskutera Duileargas-Sydows-min plan om väst- och nordeuropeiskt samarbete."

did not attend: see interview with Campbell in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 1937). The resulting steps towards the eventual establishment of the planned archive and the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1951 are given in some detail in another article by Margaret Mackay elsewhere in this volume, and will therefore be passed over here.

It is nonetheless very clear that by the time the School was opened, an individual bridge between the School of Scottish Studies and the Nordic countries had been firmly established by both John Francis and Åke Campbell. That the bridge in question was seen as having enduring value, is demonstrated by the way in which it has been nurtured and maintained during the 60 years that have passed since the School's founding.

The School's underlying sense of international awareness is demonstrated in numerous ways, and not least in the school's individual library. Indeed, the early connections between the various Nordic, Irish and Scottish departments of folklore noted above resulted in the Library of the School of Scottish Studies quickly amassing a rare and valuable range of Gaelic and Nordic monographs and journals which go back some way in time. One sincerely hopes that the authorities of the University of Edinburgh will have the sense to realise the value of allowing this unique library to retain its present independence and unity. It is still not too late to learn from the experiences of other university libraries like the Brotherton Library in the University of Leeds where a range of previously easily accessible treasures from the old individual folklore and Nordic libraries have found themselves dispersed amongst various rows of dark basement stacks and guarded special collections.

Scandinavian books, however, have not been the only Nordic arrivals to come through the doors of the School of Scottish Studies over the years. Ever since its inception, the school has welcomed a constant stream of academic visitors from the Nordic countries coming in search of the valuable comparative material the School houses (as von Sydow and Åke Campbell had hoped). One of the first of these visitors was, quite naturally, Åke Campbell, who, in October 1955, in recognition of his supportive work, became the first visiting lecturer at the newly established

department (Bringéus 2008: 183).[10] This followed two visits made by the School's secretary and archivist Stewart Sanderson to the folklore archive in Uppsala in 1953 and 1955 (Bringéus 2008: 184).

Campbell has since been succeeded by numerous other distinguished Nordic visiting lecturers, many of whom have come as part of the University of Edinburgh Northern Scholars Scheme. Established in 1956, the main purpose of this scheme is:

> *to foster co-operation between scholars of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway and Sweden, and colleagues in the University of Edinburgh, in linguistic, historical and other cultural studies which are common to these countries and to Scotland and in particular to sponsor visits by scholars of the member countries to Edinburgh.*[11]

Of the roughly 250 Northern Scholars that have so far visited the university as part of this scheme (which, as can be seen above, includes several Baltic countries), 40 have been invited by the School of Scottish Studies, five coming from Latvia and Estonia (Margaret Mackay: private e-mail: 28th June 2011). Many of these visits have resulted in new international connections and the establishment of long-lasting networks, something which has naturally helped provide students both at home and abroad with invaluable international perspectives. According to Margaret Mackay (private e-mail: 28th June 2011), the scholars in question have come

10 Campbell had also spent time in Scotland between 30th September and 15th October 1953, holding lectures not only at the School of Scottish Studies, but also at the International Conference on Celtic Studies at the University of Glasgow. Campbell stayed in Edinburgh in his role as Visiting Lecturer for five or six weeks in October and November 1955. Following a reception which was held for him (with 25 guests) and an initial lecture, he travelled to the southern Hebrides with Stewart Sanderson, and went on to hold further lectures at the School on Archive Work and Methods, Folk Museums and Folklore Studies, and Culture Zones in Sweden. On his return to Sweden, he wrote a detailed report on the School's activities (25th February 1956), underlining that considering the present situation there was a need to prioritise fieldwork, recording and archiving (Bringéus 2008: 186–187).

11 http://www.nsc.hss.ed.ac.uk/remit.cfm: last accessed 21st January 2013.

from a wide range of fields ranging "*from place-names and dialect studies to museology and material culture, song and instrumental music, narrative, social organisation, cultural revivals and religious ethnology*," something which not only underlines the range of the holdings of the department library and its various archives (which have been the key attraction for the scholars in question), but also the interests and international connections of the various lecturers that have worked at the department (who have often encouraged the international visitors to come).

Other Nordic scholars have come to the School of Scottish Studies for longer periods in the role of Visiting Lecturers or as guests of the university's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.[12] Such scholars include Bjarne Stoklund from Denmark; Nils-Arvid Bringéus from Sweden; and Åse Enerstvedt, Anne-Berit Borchgrevink and Venke Olsen from Norway. Many of these scholars have carried out not only archival research but also field work dealing with essentially Scottish topics or other areas of study involving Nordic-Scottish connections or parallels, Anne-Berit Borchgrevink researching boundaries and Venke Olsen the earlier-noted Nordic associations of John Francis Campbell. Worth particular note in this context is the Danish ethnomusicologist Thorkild Knudsen who first came to the School as a Northern Scholar in the early 1960s and went on to hold an ethnomusicological appointment at the School later in the decade, before eventually being succeeded by Peter Cooke. Knudsen's valuable field work in Skye can be heard on one of the Scottish Tradition CDs issued by the department: *Waulking Songs from Barra* (Scottish Tradition Series: vol 3: CDTRAX9003 (1993).

Yet further Nordic connections have been established and underlined by the series of Celtic-Nordic-Baltic Folklore Symposia which were originally set up by the School of Scottish Studies and The Department of Irish Folklore in Dublin in 1988, the direct fruit of the early cooperation between Scotland and Ireland and the Nordic Countries noted earlier.[13] Its roots in the International Congress of the Folk Epic, which had been

12 See http://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/: last accessed 21st January 2013.

13 Regarding these conferences, see further Gunnell 2008b: 17–20.

hosted in 1985 by the Department of Irish Folklore, and had brought a new generation of Nordic scholars into renewed contact with their Irish and Scottish counterparts across the North Sea, the first of these symposia took place in Dublin in 1988. Centring around papers presented by a number of like-minded lecturers and students from Edinburgh and Dublin, the 1988 conference set the tone and focus on legend and belief that most of the symposia have since followed, the 14 papers at the first symposium focusing on '*The Supernatural in Irish and Scottish Migratory Legends*'. Nordic scholars were not personally involved in the first gathering (with the notable exception of the key figure of Bo Almqvist, who was head of the Department of Irish Folklore at the time, and an organiser of the conference), but Irish and Scottish connections with the Nordic world and Nordic folklore scholarship were well apparent in the emphasis that was placed on migratory legends, within which Reidar Christiansen's index of migratory Norwegian legends served as a key point of comparison (Christiansen 1958). Both Almqvist and Donald Archie MacDonald engaged themselves in placing Scottish and Irish legends within this Nordic framework, noting parallels, and also establishing lists of suggested particularly Irish and Scottish types of the migratory legend (Almqvist 1991 and MacDonald 1996), types which were also becoming clear in Alan Bruford's earlier lists of Scottish Witch and Fairy legends (see also Bruford 1967).

The next symposium held in Galway in 1991 was devoted to a similar theme ('*Migratory Legends on the Supernatural*'), but was on a much larger scale. Now directly involving the Nordic countries for the first time, it included not only academics and students from Ireland and Scotland, but also delegates from other universities teaching folkloristics in neighbouring countries, and in particular those in Scandinavia. The names of the participants once again underlines the international breadth of the networks that people like Bo Almqvist, Séamas Ó Catháin, Alan Bruford, and Donald Archie MacDonald had forged during this period, including Hilda Ellis Davidson and Jacqueline Simpson from England; Bengt Holbek, Iørn Piø and Michael Chesnutt from Denmark; Olav Bø and Reimund Kvideland from Norway; Bengt af Klintberg from Sweden; Hallfreður Örn Eiríksson and Gísli Sigurðsson from Iceland; Eyðun Andreasen from the Faroe

Islands; Irma-Riita Järvinen, Pirkko-Liisa Rausma, Marjatta Jauhiainen, Jukka Saarinen from Finland; and Samuli Aikio from the Sami territories.

Other Celtic-Nordic Folklore Symposia which touched on other folklore genres (such as proverbs and riddles, children's rhymes, traditional prayers, wedding songs and death laments) but concentrated on legends and belief were held in 1993 and 1996. After a break, the symposia were revived with another meeting which took place in Reykjavík in 2005, the plenary lectures on the present state of legend scholarship once again stressing the breadth of the Celtic-Nordic-Baltic folkloristics network.[14] Those presenting plenary lectures now included Ulf Palmenfelt and Bengt af Klintberg from Sweden; Arne Bugge Amundsen from Norway; Anna Leena Siikala and Ulrika Wolf Knuts from Finland; Bo Almqvist and Séamas Ó Catháin from Ireland; Jacqueline Simpson from England, John Lindow and Timothy Tangherlini from the United States; and John Shaw from the School of Scottish Studies (who incidentally also served as the fiddle player in the conference band, The Northern Stars).

The legacy of these conferences is manifest. As Bo Almqvist underlined in his opening address to the Reykjavík symposium, the previous four conferences had resulted not only in two central indexes of migratory legend types coming into existence in Ireland and Scotland, but also "*publications amounting to more than 1600 pages, some 100 papers of well integrated solid scholarship, which have elucidated, and will continue to elucidate, connections and similarities as well as regional characteristic traits in the Celtic-Nordic-Baltic areas*."[15] The recently published material from the Reykjavík conference

14 Since the Shetland conference on which this present book is based, a further legend symposium has been held in Tartu, Estonia in 2012.

15 The papers from the first conference were published in a special *Béaloideas* volume, *The Fairy Hill is on Fire* (1991: ed. Almqvist, Ó Catháin and Ó Héalai), which has since sold out. The papers from the following conference appeared in *Béaloideas*, 1992–1993 (ed. Almqvist and Ó Héalai 1992), and 1994–1995 (ed. Almqvist and Ó Héalai 1996); *Arv*: *Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, 47 (1991), and 49 (1993); and *Folklore*, 104 (1993) and 105 (1994). Some of the material from the third conference appeared in *Arv*: *Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, 51 (1995), while that from the fourth conference appeared in Lysaght, Ó Catháin and Ó hÓgáin 1999.

brings the number of published pages up to roughly 2000.[16] There is clearly good reason for maintaining this particular series of international symposia which among other things have served to underline the key role that the scholars at the School of Scottish Studies have played in developing and maintaining international scholarly cooperation. They also point to the valuable living legacy of the folk tale research carried out by Alan Bruford, Donald Archie MacDonald and their colleagues at the School.

Involvement in symposia of this kind; hosting Visiting Lecturers and researchers; taking part in international conferences (like those run by SIEF [The International Society for Ethnology and Folklore],[17] ISFNR [International Society for Folk Narrative Research], and the *Kommission für Volksdichtung*);[18] and participating in the teaching at the international Folklore Fellows Summer School in Finland[19] are just several of the sides of the international cooperation that has been built up over the last 60 years by the members of the School of Scottish Studies with other European universities, and particularly with those Nordic institutions where folkloristics/ethnology is taught. Another important link of this kind has been the EU Erasmus teacher and student exchange programme[20] which has been built up over the last ten years or so between the School of Scottish Studies and the University of Iceland. For the fledgling department of Folkloristics (*Þjóðfræði*) at the University of Iceland where I teach, this mobility programme was a godsend: when I began teaching at the university in Iceland in 1998, the number and range of courses available to our students were highly limited. Numbers of students were comparatively low, and there was only one full time member of staff. The Erasmus agreement set up between the two universities in 2001 has enabled lecturers from

16 See Gunnell 2008a.

17 Emily Lyle has played a key role in the establishment of the SIEF Ritual Year group which meets annually.

18 Here, too, Emily Lyle has played a key role from an early point.

19 John Shaw played a key role in the FFC summer school in 2007.

20 See further http://ec.europa.eu/education/external-relation-programmes/doc72_en.htm, last accessed 21st January 2013.

the School of Scottish Studies to come to Iceland to teach short intensive courses every two years, John Shaw teaching a course on Immigrant Folkloristics; Gary West teaching two courses on heritage (in addition to holding a bagpipe concert); Katherine Campbell presenting a course on Scottish ballads; Neill Martin teaching twice on Scottish Supernatural; and Emily Lyle teaching a course on Traditional Cosmology.[21] In return, a number of teaching visits have been made to Edinburgh by myself (three times), and my colleagues Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, Kristin Schram, Katla Kjartansdóttir, and Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir. The net result of this activity has not only been the development of some close research networks, but some great and lasting friendships. I think it is also fair to say that the role of the School of Scottish Studies in assisting and encouraging the development of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland has been in many ways the equivalent to that played by the Swedish departments of folklore in the development of folklore studies in Ireland and Scotland. In 1998, the Department of Folkloristics was taking in perhaps 5 or 6 new students a year at the BA level. This year (autumn 2012), the equivalent figure was closer to 70, along with c. 15 entering the MA line.

So much for the *official* connections between the School of Scottish Studies and the Nordic Countries past and present. It is pertinent to add a few personal words about the intrinsic value that the School of Scottish Studies and its archives have for Nordic folklorists like myself. Here I will be centring on two examples from my own experience, both of which relate to ethnological research concerning Shetlandic culture (Shetland offering a natural cultural bridge between Scotland and the Nordic countries). The examples in question are my own research into international guising traditions (see Gunnell 2001 and 2007a and b); and, more recently, the research carried out by an excellent MA student of mine, Vilborg Davíðsdóttir, which deals with the legendary narratives and beliefs of Shetland, and in particular the legends told by Brucie Henderson and Tom Tulloch on the island of Yell (see Vilborg Davíðsdóttir 2011).

21 Margaret Mackay made use of a similar grant to visit Denmark in the 1980s to learn about the BA programme run in Copenhagen.

As suggested above, it might be argued that the only way to decide what is 'national' and unique about national folklore is to compare local folkloric material with that found in neighbouring countries. If the local material is different, one has to consider how and why it came into being locally (and not in other countries). If it is similar, there is good reason to consider how and why it might have come to exist in two different situations, and then how and why the material in question should have adapted itself to the local surroundings. In short, some degree of comparison is central for all of the studies we carry out, and as noted above, in terms of comparative research into the North Atlantic communities, Shetlandic culture is very important indeed. Indeed, the material collected in Shetland (and Orkney) by Scottish ethnologists like Alan Bruford demands careful consideration by anyone working on Nordic, Scottish, English or Irish folklore, not least because it contains traces of all of these cultures. It also contains material that seems to have very early roots, material which has often adapted in quite original ways to the particular geographical, social, linguistic and cultural environment of Shetland. The Shetland legendary and guising traditions that Vilborg and I have examined are perfect cases in point. In both cases, our work would have been impossible had it not been for the invaluable services and encouragement of both the Shetland Museum and Archive, and the library, archives, and staff of the School of Scottish Studies.

As noted above, my own contacts with the School of Scottish Studies began at a comparatively late point, in 2000. My earlier research into Nordic folk drama, festival traditions, and folk legends and belief (see, for example, Gunnell 1995), had made me aware that one of the central problems for Icelandic folkloristics was the way in which, in spite of publishing numerous collections of folk tales and legends, the Icelanders had shown little interest in placing their traditions, narratives and beliefs in either an immediately local or a wider international context. Everything tended to be introduced as being essentially 'Icelandic'. At that time, there was no folk narrative archive, and little or no use was made of international classification, or comparison.[22] Most of the key projects we have since

22 One reason for this was that Iceland's desire to achieve independent nationhood was not fulfilled until 1944.

been working on, including our folk legend databases,[23] our national belief survey,[24] and the building up of international teaching exchanges, have all been aimed at remedying this situation, and creating internationally minded folklorists who are interested in both the past and the present. The department has also done its best to give Icelandic students of Folkloristics some insight into Nordic, British and Gaelic folklore past and present (alongside their own), as a means of enabling them to judge objectively what can be said to be truly Icelandic and what not.

It was obvious that if the Department of Folkloristics at the University of Iceland was to be built up, an examination needed to be made into how the subject was being taught elsewhere. For this reason, during my first few years of teaching, I paid visits to numerous other successful folklore and ethnology departments in Dublin, Edinburgh, Oslo, Visby, Helsinki and Turku in Estonia, partly for this purpose, and partly to establish research networks. It was completely natural that I should spend my first sabbatical in 2001 at the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh. Over and above my own personal long-term interest in Scottish history, culture and landscape, I had recently begun working with the Danish ethnologist, Carsten Bregenhøj on a large international project on Nordic guising traditions which eventually resulted in the publication of the book, *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (Gunnell 2007a), another work that had the deliberate aim of underlining the inherent weakness of studying folklore by individual nation. Up until that point, one regularly heard Nordic scholars of the past talking of 'their' 'individual' 'national' disguise traditions. Few had attempted to look at the ways in which these traditions cross borders and form wider cross-border patterns, or considered looking at them in this wider context. It was for this reason that those involved decided from the start not to limit themselves to the Nordic countries, but also to bring in the customs of many neighbouring areas, such as Estonia,

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23 See https://notendur.hi.is/terry/database/sagnagrunnur.htm, last accessed 21st January 2013, and Gunnell 2010.

24 See Ásdís A. Arnalds, Ragna Benedikta Garðarsdóttir, Unnur Dilja Teitsdóttir 2008.

Greenland, and especially the Northern Isles of Scotland. It was clear that guising traditions similar to those known all over the Nordic countries had also existed in Shetland, and that they lay behind the customs which developed into Up-Helly-Aa. It also seemed apparent that the Shetland traditions were old, and that they were directly related to those known in Iceland, the Faroes and Norway (see Gunnell 1995: 161–179; 2001; and 2007a and b). At the first available opportunity, I therefore came over to Scotland, first visiting Shetland in 2000 in order to carry out fieldwork into the traditions in question (with the assistance of Ian Tait and Brian Smith at the Shetland Museum and Archive), and then later staying for six months as a visiting academic at the School of Scottish Studies during my sabbatical in the spring of 2001. This visit was extremely fruitful, not only for my own research, but also for our department and our students. As noted above, it also led to the forging of some very firm and lasting friendships.

Housed in a small room at the top of one of the winding staircases that run through the School in George Square, and regularly fed with tea, biscuits and conversation in the staff tearoom in the basement, I became aware of a strong sense of affiliation with the rest of the staff in the department. Unfortunately too late to meet people like Hamish Henderson, Alan Bruford, and Donald Archie MacDonald, I soon became acquainted with the richness of their work. Preparing to teach a course on Gaelic folklore in Iceland, I sat in on a course taught by John Shaw on Scottish Narrative, and was soon engaged in deep conversations with Emily Lyle about Galoshins and other Scottish disguise traditions and games, something which led to her writing a chapter on Galoshins in *Masks and Mumming in the Nordic Area* (Lyle 2007; see also Lyle 2011), and to my own involvement in the international SIEF Ritual Year conferences that Emily was organising. With Ian Fraser, I discussed Nordic place names in Scotland, and with Gary West, the development of Scottish heritage and bag-pipe traditions. At the department's Burns' Night, one also became aware of the wealth of rare musical talent contained within the School, something that has continued to grow over the years. In addition to Gary West's pipes, John Shaw's fiddle and the dulcet tones of Morag MacLeod

that I encountered in 2001, one also got to know in more recent times the fiddle and voice of Katherine Campbell, and Neill Martin's keyboards, guitar and hurdy-gurdy. Viewing these figures as a kind of musical ensemble, one somehow started seeing Margaret Mackay in the role of band manager, and Emily Lyle as an enduring spiritual Muse.

Alongside the personal connections and inspirations that came from the members of staff, there were the aforementioned rare and valuable attractions of the School of Scottish Studies Library and archive holdings. These provided the perfect follow up to what I had managed to find during my fieldwork activities in Shetland in 2000 and 2001, and not least in the form of the contextual materials that had been collected in Shetland by Alan Bruford and others, and then all the sound recordings, films, photographs and other materials contained in the archives concerning other Scottish guising traditions, all of which have been not only invaluable for Scotland and Scottish ethnologists, but also for those from northern Europe as a whole – as scholars like Carl von Sydow, Åke Campbell, Reidar Christiansen and O. M. Sandvik had realised they would be. It cannot be stressed enough that the folklore library in the School of Scottish Studies is one of the best in the British Isles, largely as a result of the school's aforementioned international connections. Here one has access not only to most of the key folklore journals of the past and present, but also a wide range of rare material old and new, concerning both Scotland and Ireland, and also the rest of Europe. It was an honour for me to be able to add new materials (from Shetland) to those already contained in the School.

It also soon became clear to me exactly how valuable the materials contained in the School of Scottish Studies archives were not only for Nordic guising research but also for a range of other fields which underline the close cultural connections that have always existed between the Nordic countries and Scotland. As the work of Emily Lyle, Francis Fischer and others have shown, this is particularly evident in the Nordic parallels to Scottish traditional ballads (such as '*The Douglas Tragedy*', '*Lord Ronald*', and '*The Two Sisters*');[25] in a number of wonder tales found in both the Nordic

25 See Lyle 1994: 13; Fischer 2007; and McAlpine 2007, 309.

and Gaelic traditions, like those earlier researched by the Norwegian scholar Reidar Christiansen (Christianen 1959); and in other traditions connected to the ritual year. Other obvious connections can be seen in music and children's games like those researched in Aberdeen by Erik Kaas Nielsen and Alistair Roberts (see Alburger 2007: 264; and Roberts 2007: 496–498). There is particular value in the very rich collection of Scottish legends which have been collected over the years for the sound archive by people like Calum Maclean, Alan Bruford and Donald Archie MacDonald, and can now be accessed in the *Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches* database.[26] It was for this reason, among others, that I advised the Icelandic author Vilborg Davíðsdóttir to take part of her MA study in Edinburgh, following in the path of another student of ours, Kristinn Schram, who completed his PhD on Icelandic identity at the School of Scottish Studies in 2010 (see Schram 2010) adding yet further close connections between the two departments.

Vilborg Davíðsdóttir had wanted to research the degree to which the legends told by people reflected their social and geographical environments, the degree to which they can be said to reflect personal and local world view, and at the same time, the degree to which it is possible to rebuild a performance context for them, a 'thick corpus' like that called for by the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko (Honko 2000). Having written a novel about the Scottish isles in Viking times, Vilborg chose to concentrate on the legendary material collected over the years from the Yell storytellers, Tom Tulloch and Brucie Henderson, using not only all she could find of the treasure trove of stories collected by Calum Maclean, Peter Cooke, Alan Bruford and Tadaake Miyake for the School of Scottish Studies in the 1950s and 1970s (until 1980), but also other legends recorded for the BBC and the Shetland Archive by people like Tom Anderson, Laurence Graham, Archie P. Lee, Andy Gear, Bobby Tulloch, Jonathan Wills and Robert L. Johnson (see further Vilborg Davíðsdóttir 2011).

Since an overview of the wide range of Shetland material contained in the archive of the School of Scottish Studies is given in another

26 See http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/, last accessed 21st January 2013.

chapter by Cathlin Macaulay, my discussion of Vilborg's work here will be limited to a brief summary of the international value of the archive materials she has examined, and not least the way in which the various recordings of Brucie and Tom's legends over the years (often involving the same stories, told individually or by both men) demonstrate how their storytelling develops; how they themselves develop individual legends; how they tell these legends differently for different sets of people; and (considering especially those stories both men tell) the way in which each man has his own particular approach to the material, related perhaps to the fact that the two storytellers had slightly different backgrounds, one (Brucie) learning his material largely from men and the other (Tom) from women. Indeed, it is also clear that even though both men have backgrounds within the same tradition, they clearly have different interests and approaches to their material. Considering the background material that Vilborg has assembled on the world of Yell, there is little doubt the material in question is distinctly Shetlandic. However, there is equally little doubt about the fact that this material has direct relation to both the Nordic, Scottish and Gaelic traditions. The Nordic connection is clearly reflected in Shetlandic legends about changelings (F61–70; cf. ML5085[27]); the *kelpie* or water horse (like the Nordic *nøkken*: F57, 58, 68, 94/ MLSIT 4086–7); the *selkie* (or seal man or woman cf. ML 4080); the brownie (like the Nordic *nisse* or *tomte*) (F120/ 121; cf. ML 7000–7020); and the general form of the trows (like the 'hidden people' in both Norway and Iceland, and the Irish fairies [Bruford 1997]). Connections are especially clear in the well-known Yell legends of the '*Trow of Windhouse*', which seem directly connected to a Per Gynt legend about a huge shapeless troll, '*Den store Bøygen*', which was told to Peter Chr. Asbjørnsen in Hallingdal, Norway in the nineteenth century (Leistøl 1941; 1948; Bruford: 1982, 80–84; and Gunnell 2004). On the other hand, it is equally apparent that Shetland legends about ship-sinking witches would seem to have firm

27 On the various types of legend and the symbols (ML: Migratory Legend; MLSIT: Migratory Legend Suggested Irish Types; F: Fairy Legend Type; W: Witch Legend Type), see further Almqvist 1991; MacDonald 1996; and Christiansen 1958.

roots in Scotland (W40A-B; MLSIT 3036), while the Rip van Winkle-like accounts of fiddlers entering hills (F22 and 24) seem to be part of a general Gaelic tradition.[28] In short, Vilborg's work shows exactly why there is good reason for scholars interested in Nordic legends to examine the material contained in the Scottish archives (not least with regard to dating and motifs). It also demonstrates what Scottish scholars working in the same field can gain from taking note of the work of Nordic scholars: John Francis Campbell and Åke Campbell clearly knew what they were doing when they constructed the scholarly bridges that continue to exist between Scotland and the Nordic world.

Vilborg's thesis nonetheless has another important message for all of us. It underlines the key general importance of maintaining and developing the old archives which some had talked of relegating to cellars, or even burning in the 1970s (Wilgus 1973: 244–245),[29] on the basis of the fact that past collection had different standards to those of the present. The thesis clearly demonstrates that inherent value of all of the old archives, even in an age of performance studies which tends to concentrate on the present, the immediate (rather than the international), and the film (rather than the sound recording). It shows how careful and combined use of the wide range of materials available in the archives (used alongside those materials relating to social history), and especially those contained in the School of Scottish Studies still enable the creation of thick corpuses about the storytellers of the past and enable researchers to analyse their narratives within a social context, much as one does with living fieldwork. It underlines that archives like those contained in the school remain a largely unexplored treasure-trove not only for folklorists but also for social historians, anthropologists, scholars of literature, musicians and more, and not only for scholars from Scotland, Ireland and England, but from also the Nordic countries.

As this article has shown, the present flourishing ties between the School of Scottish Studies and the Nordic countries are built on deep roots

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28 Naturally, the Shetland changeling, brownie and kelpie legends are also influenced by Gaelic forms of the same legends and beliefs.

29 I am grateful to Vilborg for finding this reference for me.

which in fact go back to the early connections between the two areas in Viking times. They bode well for the future, and further cooperation at the level of both staff and students. One hopes that these connections will continue to flourish and grow in the years to come, watered by the Carrying Stream that encourages us to work together.

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The School of Scottish Studies, an Island Community

Carl Lindahl

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Swapping Stories: Folktales from Louisiana *(1997) was named the Louisiana Humanities Book of the Year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. He has received the Alcée Fortier Award from the American Folklore society. Among his books are* Earnest Games: Folkloric Patterns in the Canterbury Tales *(1987),* Cajun Mardi Gras Masks *(1997),* Perspectives on the Jack Tales *(2001), and* American Folktales from the Collections of the Library of Congress *(2004).*

In 2002 he was a scholar in residence at the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh, and during the academic year of 2004–2005 he returned to the School as a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar to study relationships between the folktale traditions of Scotland, Ulster, and the American Appalachians.

In 2005 he founded Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston [SKRH], the world's first project in which disaster survivors have taken the lead in documenting fellow survivors' experience of disaster. He continues to co-direct SKRH, which received worldwide recognition for its role in aiding survivors overcome the traumatic effects of hurricanes. A discussion of SKRH and some of the survivor interviews may be found in the book Second Line Rescue: Vernacular Responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita *(2012), which he co-edited with Barry Jean Ancelet and Marcia Gaudet.*

He currently serves on the international editorial Board of Fabula: Journal of Folktale Studies*.*

Among all the contributors to this book, I have the briefest personal experience of the School of Scottish Studies. My firsthand knowledge of the School's great scholars is no older than the new millennium, so there is nothing I can do to deepen or lengthen the memories of those

who have written from lifetimes of personal knowledge of their heroes, colleagues, and friends. What I can do, however, is share with you a sense of what makes the School so extraordinarily important to outsiders, and what makes it Scotland's single most valuable institution for enhancing the recognition and continuity of Scottish traditional culture.

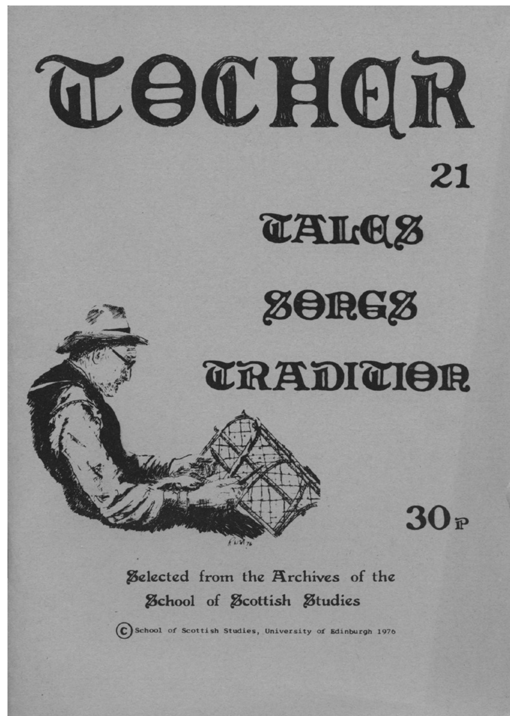
Twenty-four years before I met the collectors, scholars, and archivists of the School of Scottish Studies, I experienced the School in print. Mary Ellen Brown, the extraordinary Child scholar, taught me in my first year as a graduate student in Folklore at Indiana University. The course was 'British Folklore', and among the assigned texts was issue number 21 of *Tocher,* then selling for 30p in Scotland and for not much more at the university bookstore. There were some heavy tomes assigned for that course, including Richard M. Dorson's *The British Folklorists: A History.* All of them were thicker and costlier than the *Tocher.* But that *Tocher* issue was (and not only penny for penny) by far the best purchase I made at Indiana University. It was the unique text from that British Folklore course that stayed with me in a deeply personal way to set the better part of the professional course I've taken since.

Tocher number 21 featured the great family of Traveller artists known as the Stewarts of Blair, with many tales and songs from Alex and Belle Stewart, alive at that time, as well as from Alex's father, John, and sister, Bella Higgins (who had passed away by then), and Alex and Belle's daughter Sheila (who continues to perform the family traditions even today). The family's performances, rendered in Scots, took up the lion's share of the issue, but there were also descriptions of Shetland haaf fishing traditions shared by James Smith of Unst and John Ridland of Troswickness, and numerous tales and songs in Gaelic, with English translations, including a devil legend from North Uist and a prayer for the protection of cattle from Vatersay.

The issue was filled with the creations of traditional artists so celebrated that even I had previously heard some of their names. But there were also the names of the scholars and collectors, which I knew a bit better: in this one issue, Alan Bruford, Hamish Henderson, Emily Lyle, Donald Archie MacDonald, Calum Maclean, and James Porter, among others, all

had a hand. Their names were harder to find on the small pages than the names of the storytellers. The folklorists in the issue uniformly presented themselves with a humility that I could not easily associate with the American folklorists I was just then beginning to meet.

This tiny production had the look of a chapbook and, in the best sense possible, that was precisely what it was. It did not project a forbidding air of scholarly superiority, and that was one great reason why I liked it so much. Despite its slim count of 48 small pages and its homey look, it was substantial. I learned as much from that one issue as I did from any of the longer, more outwardly important texts that I read for the course. It was a publication that belonged at least as much to the folk who shared their arts as to the folklorists who recorded them. Indeed, at the end, there



Tocher *no 21, 1976*

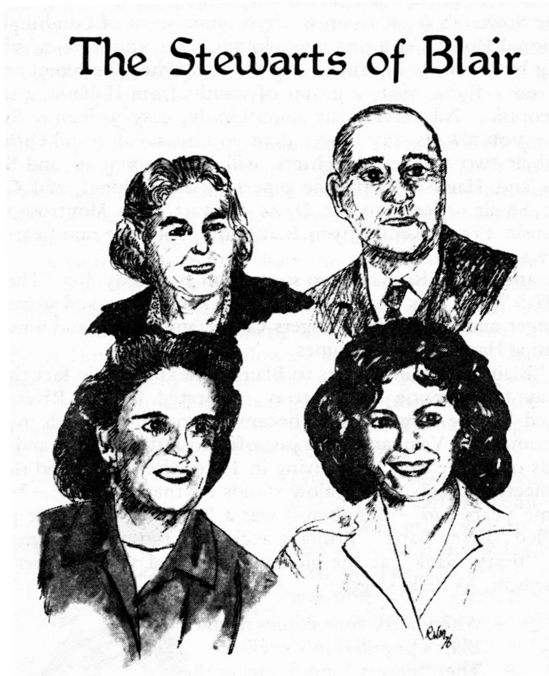
were notes to the editor from civilians who had no degrees but who deeply knew their own traditions, as well as an obituary roll listing the names of the friends of the School, especially those traditional artists who had passed away since the previous issue had been printed.

It is for those very touches, and what I rightly intuited them to represent, that to this day I consider *Tocher* the model of what a folklore publication should be. There is no national journal in the United States that demonstrates the level of respect that *Tocher* accords the traditional artist, or that, like *Tocher,* steadfastly refuses to allow academic pretense to undercut that honest respect. When I compared *Tocher* to the major national and regional American journals, I found that little chapbook incomparably better. In the mid 1970s it was nearly impossible to find a story or a song published in the American journals. Indeed it was difficult to find an American author brave enough to threaten a theory with a fact as plain and obvious as a story or a song. This was the era during which Dan Ben Amos – an imposing scholar then and now – could write a book on storytelling in Benin without presenting a single one of the stories that he had heard in his fieldwork, and without describing at any length one of the story's performances or performers. The title of the Ben Amos's book was *Sweet Words*, but the sweetest words were missing. *Tocher,* in contrast, gave us the stories alongside affectionate portraits of the performers. In an era when American scholarship sought to discover folklore everywhere but in its expression – *Tocher* had no trouble identifying the teller and the tale, the singer and the song as folklore's reason for being. No matter what one's orientation, that is what, in the end, ethnology or folklore *has* to be about. And that is why *Tocher* remains my model for the best that folklore can offer. Unless folklorists can surrender their ambitions to the people who constitute their real reason for being, we are just a bunch of academics talking to ourselves about people whom we don't know well enough to rightly describe.

It wasn't until the year 2000 that I finally got to George Square – and saw the childhood home of Sir Walter Scott, the Georgian structure that he described as a "*cat-lugged band box*" (Wilson 1980:13) – and, a few doors to its south, another band box, the School itself. I learned in a short

time that what made that early issue of *Tocher* so remarkable was being replicated within that building on a daily basis. The *Tocher* issue on the Stewarts of Blair featured an appreciation by Maurice Fleming, who was not only a journalist and folklore collector, but also a neighbor of the Stewarts and a family friend. He described their welcoming home as a magnet for international travelers who honored the family's traditions as much as did the Stewarts themselves. Fleming wrote:

> *Letters with strange postmarks keep falling on their mat …. You just never know, when you walk in, who will be sitting by the wide log fire – Big Willie McPhee the piper, or Ewan MacColl on a flying visit, a group of youths from Holland, a student from Nebraska. All receive*



The featured section on the Stewarts of Blair, Tocher *no 21, 1976*

> *the same kindly, easy welcome. Sit long enough – you always stay longer than you intended – and Cathie and Sheila, their two married daughters, will be dropping in, and Sheila's sons … the ramifications of Clan Stewart seem limitless.*

Once I found my way to 27–29 George Square, it did not take me long to discover that the library at the School was just a slightly more formal version of the Stewart hearth. It was the lost and found of Scottish tradition, most often meaning that everything – and everybody – that was lost elsewhere could be found there. There was that same dynamic of people's comings and goings at work in the library: I first met Margaret Bennett, Emily Lyle, Margaret Mackay, John MacInnes, Donald Meek,

The School of Scottish Studies, 27–29 George Square, Edinburgh

Stanley Robertson, and numerous other special friends and practitioners of Scottish traditional arts in those rooms. I learned as much from their chat as I did from the books that surrounded us.

Among the things that distinguish the books and conversation in the School's library are two in particular that, to my mind, also distinguish the people and the work that have made the School such a powerful resource and magnet. First is the strength of comparatist scholarship that shapes that library and continually works to enlighten those who use it. You may find this comparatist streak working, I think, as far back as you can find Scots writing ethnographically about other Scots.

Close Comparison and the Respectful Recognition of Difference

In *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland ca. 1695,* Martin Martin presents close parallel descriptions of one tiny Gaelic-speaking community after another with a minute appreciation of difference that sets him apart from Herodotus, Caesar, Tacitus, Bede, and the other Western models that preceded him. What I am suggesting is that the current comparative excellence of the School is deeply embedded in local cultural tendencies. Martin displays a level of comparative precision that prefigures what the folklore world would discover two centuries later in the meticulous work of Francis James Child, Franz Boas, Antti Aarne, and Stith Thompson: a penchant for close comparison that refuses to distort any of the individual expressions and yet still works carefully to articulate their interrelationships.

So the remarkable comparative precision that has come to me to signal the best work of the School seems rooted in something long-established and deep-seated in Scottish ethnography, something I know best from the narrative perspective. We find it at work in the 19th century in rich ways.

Set the work published by Robert Chambers in 1841 (the second edition of *Popular Rhymes of Scotland)* and John Francis Campbell of Islay in 1860 (with his *Popular Tales of the West Highlands)* against the preceding international gold standard of the Grimm brothers, and the two Scots emerge as enlightened revolutionaries. The Grimms were looking for archetypes and other sorts of ideal forms of the folktales they collected; to

this end, they created their own tales by mixing the tales told by countesses together with those told by innkeepers' daughters, and in the process – despite their intentions – stealing the voices of them all.

Nearly three decades after the Grimms comes Chambers, who honors the integrity of each tale and teller that he brings into his collections. He publishes complete tales, different versions of the same type or title, next to each other, and serves both equally. He gives us, word for word, Charles K. Sharpe's careful rendering of '*Whuppity Story*' as recalled from the narration of his childhood nurse, Jenny, followed by the word-for-word rendition of a different version submitted by another contributor. Chambers preserves the integrity of all of his texts. He does what the Grimms at one brief moment in 1815 said they were going to do, but never accomplished. They were intent they said, in preserving every word of one great storyteller because, to them, she embodied the ideal voice of an entire culture. But in the end the Grimms did not let even this one exceptional narrator speak for herself. Chambers realized that one does not honor the greatness of a tradition by singling out one special artist as the representative of them all and then 'improving' her tales with heavy edits; rather, one allows each voice its full, unaltered expression, and tries to repeat it exactly as first rendered.

Less than two decades after Chambers' remarkable feat, John Francis Campbell of Islay's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* presented a deeper statement in the same vein that introduces the field of folklore to a new, higher standard of representation. Chambers had relied mainly on correspondents who remembered as best they could the tales they had once heard and tried to ventriloquize their long dead tellers. But Campbell of Islay would not settle for memories of someone else's words: he gave us exactly the words of the narrators, a century before it became the standard practice of folklorists to do so. And Campbell, like Chambers, honored the various narrators' voices. He enfranchised everyone. Others followed suit: the remarkable, recently-published *Tales from Highland Perthshire,* were first collected, *verbatim,* with respectful regard for each narrator, by Lady Evelyn Stewart Murray in the closing years of the nineteenth century. This careful attention to the words of each storyteller, and the recognition that

every tale possesses personal and regional inflections that make it a worthy work in its own right, were simply part of a national approach to tradition. Such attentiveness, rare or absent in other nations, simply represents the way things have been done in Scotland.

No matter what outside fantasies of Scotland exist, it is difficult to find any insider cultural characterization of Scotland that does not bring the difference of Lowland and Highland into play. Typically, in characterizing their nation, Scots will identify many more binary divisions: between Gaelic speakers and Scots speakers, between island and mainland, Catholic and Covenanter, nationalist and unionist. I believe that the School's excellence in honoring the uniqueness of every folk artist and work of folk art has to do with Scotland's history of cultural difference. The artists whose work is seen as representing Scotland tend to earn that honor through respectful recognition of difference. I do not think it an accident that Walter Scott earned his reputation as a novelist through *Waverley,* a story of a Sassenach converted through experience to respect for the Highlanders. I do not think it an accident that Burns' reputation as a love poet rests largely on his imagined relationship with a woman who apparently lived just across the Firth of Clyde from him, but who in fact was born into a different cultural world and likely spoke a different language. Scotland's literary myths are consecrated to this notion of difference, and the School of Scottish Studies' great ethnographers are also, in a much more grounded way, conditioned by that same recognition. In their fieldwork, these ethnographers have typically explored two or more different realms. Although brought back to Scotland expressly to record Gaelic-speaking traditions, Calum Maclean also worked with the Scots speakers of the Borders, as his nephew Cailean Maclean narrates in an essay in this book. Hamish Henderson and Alan Bruford mastered the narrative traditions of both Scots and Gaelic speakers. Donald Archie MacDonald, the co-editor of the magisterial *Scottish Traditional Tales,* worked equally with Bruford in putting together a national folk narrative collection based upon these two remarkable corpora. That special double-focused work continues today: Emily Lyle and Margaret Mackay have recorded oral traditions in both Scots and Gaelic, and in the field of community ritual, Neill Martin

has produced studies of both the Gaelic-language courtship rituals of the Highlands and Islands and the Scots-language Galoshins folk plays of the Lowlands (N. Martin 2007a, 2007b).

That respectful recognition of difference has made the School the ideal site for exploring the international comparisons that become increasingly important as the European Union matures and international students come to Edinburgh to learn Scottish ethnology with an eye toward studying the traditions of their native countries as well as those of the host nation. The work that Katherine Campbell has done in Slovenia, that Neill Martin has pursued in Hungary, that Margaret Mackay has constantly fostered among immigrant and minority populations here in Scotland, and that Emily Lyle has undertaken everywhere in her comparative explorations of the ritual year is part of a great expansion that has broadened the base of the School in fruitful ways. In my decade of visiting the School, I have met a German student coming here to study to Scottish Gaelic, as one would expect, but also a Danish student working on Norse Eddic material and an Italian student who has published major work on northern Italian narrative and festive traditions. These students have prospered at the School because this it a place where close comparative research is superlatively done.

This comparatist streak in Scottish folklore comes from honoring every speaker. We are able to discover the one – the one narrator, the one tale, the one singer, the one song – and know the one best, by refusing to surrender the various identities of the many. Close listening, close comparison, and faithfulness to sources has generated a great tradition in scholarship.

The palpable fruits of this scholarship, the measurable wealth of the School, lies of course in its remarkable archives: the sound archive, the tale archive, the Tyree archive, and the print and digital resources that have sprung from these archives. Among the narrative performances recorded in Scotland are those recorded by Calum Maclean, which John Shaw and Andrew Wiseman have recently compiled into a website, one of the richest imaginable resources of Gaelic oral tradition. The monumental Sound Archive, administered by Cathlin Macaulay, is the repository of all of the School's recordings, including the great collections that Hamish Henderson, Alan Bruford, Linda Williamson, Barbara McDermitt and

others have made of the Scottish Travellers. The Sound Archive has supplied nearly all of the songs and tales that appeared in *Tocher,* as well as the music and verbal art of the Greentrax series of commercial sound recordings, the *Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches*, and other publically accessible websites.

The value of these collections is inestimable, and it is long past time for the increasingly autonomous Scottish government to fully recognize that what is housed in 27–29 George Square easily rivals anything that can be found in the Scottish National Museum (let alone Holyrood Palace, or the Castle) as a resource for Scottish tradition. In recent years the University of Edinburgh and other governmental institutions have begun to demonstrate their recognition of the School's importance by generously funding the digitalization of the Calum Maclean Collection and many other archival treasures. Thanks to the work of the School anyone, anywhere in the world, can now hear many of the songs and tales that have made *Tocher* the greatest journal of its time.

An Island Community

My only misgiving about digitizing the School's archives is that those who now enjoy these resources could easily forget that – priceless as these recordings are – they are only the frozen representations of great living traditions, and that they exist for us now only because of the network of personal relationships established between the folklorists and the folk.

The second special feature of the School's research, and the single most important reason for its excellence, lies in the bonds that it fostered between folklorist and folk. This is the same reason why *Tocher* is the model folklore journal. *Tocher* was founded on the premise that there is no substitute for local knowledge. *Tocher* was created in the certainty that we cannot properly observe folk culture without entering into it. That we can't just simply *watch* the folk; rather, we must join them. It is an inescapable fact that nearly all of the narratives recorded by the School, and many of the songs as well, are no better than the personal relationships created and maintained in the moments of recording. A true collector of folklore does not merely hold out a mic for the performer, and

A recent issue of Tocher*: no 58*

is not merely seeking information. Rather, to capture lore as it lives, the collector establishes a relationship of engaged insider-ship, a recording environment that allows the performer not merely to deliver the content of a story or the summary of a song, but much more than that. A performance that does justice to the tradition in which it was created must incorporate the structures, styles, strategies, nuances, and attitudes fostered and typically employed within the artist's home community. These are qualities that will easily contort or dissolve if we try to impose a foreign frame of inquiry or interviewing style. The structures and styles we seek are not those of formal performances. Much of the greatest verbal folk artistry is intended not as proscenium art, but rather as '*kitchen table stories*' (Lindahl 2012): intimate, conversational, and above all shared with others who have been brought up exposed to those same styles.

I repeat: our understanding is no *better* than our relationships during interviewing. This is not the same as the postmodern view that our understanding is no *other* than the relationship between interviewer and the interviewee. That view needs to be examined in terms of a brief, broad look back at folklorists' assumptions concerning why we observe and interview in the first place. In early excitement over the folk, the urge to know was spurred by the conviction of shared identity: the researcher and the researched possessed a common origin and therefore a common essence. For Herder, like the Romantic nationalists who followed him, the folk were the best surviving representation of a pure national past; he believed that he needed to study them to discover his and his nation's shared core identity (Herder 1773). When evolutionary theory came to dominate folklore studies, we looked to representatives of more primitive cultures, because they presumably showed us where we came from: they were going through the same stages of development that we had once experienced (Tylor 1871). Both of these early ideas were working in the mind of William Goodell Frost when he looked at the Appalachian mountaineers of the American South and saw them both as his national progenitors and as the generic barbarians on whose sturdy backs all civilization was built: he called them "*our contemporary ancestors*" (Frost 1899).

The impulse to inflict individual and national egos upon communities still survives in pockets of our discipline and positively thrives in many lay perceptions of folklore; it is in reaction to them that postmodern ethnography declared group identity dead. In many po-mo formulations, there is no group consciousness, and no group is recoverable in the act of recording. We are simply a bunch of separate subjective bundles. Because we cannot know anyone else, let us simply examine ourselves. The Post-modernists were certainly correct about a lot of things – for instance, in recognizing that we can never escape our own subjectivity (Tyler 1986, 1987). We may thank them for stressing this necessary perception. Yet it is important to question their proposed solution: to make the goal of fieldwork – "*the comprehension of the self through the detour of the comprehension of the other*" (Rabinow 1977), an enormous dialectical overstatement, perhaps at one time a necessary overstatement, but ultimately a means of keeping the Other, permanently Other.

The great collectors of the School of Scottish Studies never lapsed into this demeaning Post-modernist posture, for three reasons. First, for those who seriously believe that there is such a thing as community culture – or whose disciplinary name, FOLK-LORE, presupposes it – this celebration of individual subjectivity and the goal of self-discovery effectively declare the discipline dead. Elsewhere, there have been attempts to do away with such terms as 'folklore' and 'ethnology' and replace them with 'expressive culture', but through such a move we would lose the sense that we are studying groups: families, neighborhoods, congregations, and the like. And the scholars of the School have not abandoned the group.

A second issue is that Post-modern ethnography, for all its seeming differences from earlier views of folklore, simply repeats the fatal obsession of all the prior approaches: the obsession with *ME*. In seeking our contemporary ancestors, we were looking right past the people in front of us and into the mirror behind them. We believed that we were studying our roots; our goal was to know ourselves. So Post-modernists, in declaring the group dead, were simply making it easy to return to ethnography's – and the West's – favored obsession: me. There is, at root, nothing new and revolutionary about this approach. Its object is strikingly similar to

Herder's and E.B. Tylor's, though– as is typical of Western modernity and Postmodernity – even more selfish. So when Stephen Tyler declares that we can get nothing more from interviews than a kind of mutual therapy – effectively retaining the 'folk narrator' as a personal psychoanalyst, the whole process becomes patently, and by this point unsurprisingly, about us. The 'folk' are reduced to supporting actors in our autobiographical accounts of self-discovery.

The third – and for me, the greatest – problem with this construction of the world as consisting of numberless separate subjectivities is that it is rejected out of hand, in praxis when not explicitly, by many members of many communities. In fact, the subjectivist stance is a tiny minority position, when it is apparent at all, in every group among whom I've conducted extensive fieldwork. At times in the communities that I've studied the sovereign self is asserted as an ideal to the world outside but minimized or erased from practice *within* the group. I remember a friend from a small and economically troubled Louisiana town whom I've been visiting for more than 20 years. He had recently been laid off after an injury on the job; he was out of money and for good reason worried about his health. I suggested that he sign on for workman's compensation. But, even though he had paid into plans that could compensate him for his injury, he said: "*I'll never do that. I'm my own man*" – a powerful display of the self-sovereignty of the face that he shows his employers. But he lived his daily life in a neighborhood network in which self was continually subordinated to interdependent relationship. He had moved away from Louisiana with his nuclear family to work a high-paying job, but after a few months he quit and the family returned because they missed family and neighbors. He could have made a healthy living as a mechanic had he lived in a distant town, and he had tried that once too; instead he returned to spend most of his time fixing relatives' and friends' cars for free or barter. The assertion of being his own man was true on the face that he turned to the outside world: but inside his own community his life was bounded by mutual obligations, and he repeatedly chose that life over a life of independence elsewhere in which he could exercise the supreme selfhood of being his own man. In some isolated contexts,

he paid lip service to the notion that every man can and should be an island — but in his persisting choice to live and act within the tangible boundaries and established networks of his community, his choice to stay within the boundaries of that community nearly always and no matter the expense to him, he spoke and demonstrated an ironclad commitment to, and shared identity with, his family and friends (cf. Lindahl 1997).

So in making self-therapy the goal of fieldwork we set up an impossible representational situation: forcing the narrators' worldviews into a conceptual frame that they rarely if ever share on their home turf. In whatever ontological sense it is true that we are mutually isolated islands of subjectivity, this idea is not even represented as a distant notion in the vast majority of fieldwork that I've conducted. If it is our goal to represent these people on their own terms, we cannot successfully represent them in terms that they themselves reject.

The communities that created the great treasures of the School's archives were (and many remain) extraordinarily close-knit. Most of them experienced a significant isolation: they were island communities, separated from most of the rest of Scotland, not only by water, but language; or Traveller communities, rendered separate by migratory lifestyle and social stigma; or working communities (such as fishing, waulking, herding groups), set apart by prodigious, often subsistence labour. The greatest spur for solidifying groups, intensifying community interaction, and creating rich traditional artistry is a tight *involuntary frame*: people are driven into interdependence by war, disaster, incarceration, economic or geographic necessity, the bigotry of more powerful groups. Whereas the 'folk' groups that dominate our public space (folk musicians, folk dancers, storytelling groups) are increasingly voluntary and recreational in nature, the groups with which the School has worked have shared the involuntary frame: they tend to be communities of both birth and necessity, and their art is testimony to their close neighborly bonds.

The more intensely involuntary the frame, the more readily those within it bond. This fact is borne out in a recent book by Christopher Mylne that chronicles his eighteen months on the dramatically isolated

island of Foula (Mylne 2011). Mylne chose to serve as the island's teacher and lay missionary; once there, though, there was little choice remaining. He was the island's only religious official; he conducted all services and rituals in ways dictated by longstanding community tradition. He was also bound to his fellow islanders in every other aspect of his life, sharing food, shelter, fuel, equipment, physical and emotional strength, as his neighbors did with him. Within the frame of necessity, a richly interdependent community thrived.

The folklorists of the School, like Mylne, chose to study community culture, and, like Mylne, once within the community, did not merely conduct hit-and-run collecting. They became the friends, stalwarts, and advocates of their newfound communities. Some went native, marrying into the families from whom they recorded traditions. Most became champions of their adopted communities' legal rights, as in the case of Hamish Henderson, who fought to ensure the just treatment of Scotland's Travellers.

If you do fieldwork properly, you will soon multiply the list of holiday cards you send and funerals you attend. You will be adopted and loved, and your loves will be the loves of those you study – and 'study' will soon be a term utterly inadequate to describe your relation to your 'folk.' Your fieldwork goal, as necessary to pursue as it is impossible to achieve, will be the representation of the folks you study *on their own terms* – and it will inevitably follow that folklore and folklore fieldwork will be the work of advocacy (Lindahl 2004).

The School's dedication to its traditional communities is so ingrained that to speak to its staff of the importance of community-immersion fieldwork is to bring coals to Newcastle, peat to Islay, wind to Shetland. Yet the folklorist's need to bond with the folk is a requisite that much of the folklore world has not yet learned. In the area of fieldwork that I know best, folk narrative, the greatest American folklorists, those who excelled in local knowledge, people like Vance Randolph and Leonard Roberts, were community insiders but institutionally homeless. In the past thirty years, most of the great North American theory-based folklore programs (University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas, UCLA) have collapsed

under the weight of their theory. Only in recent decades are the programs built on local knowledge beginning to thrive (University of Louisiana, the University of Wisconsin, Western Kentucky University, Memorial University of Newfoundland); at these schools, the local people who clean the dorms and lock the classroom doors at night are often recognized as the cultural experts; in matters of tradition, the enlightened professors will defer to them.

These are not relationships that one can cultivate objectively or impersonally. Many of us were trained academically, before Post-modernism, in the scholarly illusion that one must be objective. I remember a great senior American folklore scholar who had been trained to assert that communities must be studied from a dispassionate emotional distance. Once she got into a debate with a young man, a man committed, like the School's staff, to immersion. The older professor asserted that a great belief scholar was one who did not herself believe in the beliefs that she was studying. The young folklorist responded, "*Does that mean that to study traditional cuisine you would have to be anorexic*?" Or to study folksong, you would have to be deaf? No, if you cultivate distance you will never know the community well enough to represent it adequately in writings or recordings. Rather, you enter into a close relationship that makes the community your teacher. You approach the community caringly, and with the same humility evident in *Tocher.* That humility goes hand in hand with deep community involvement. The staff of the School has so thoroughly internalized the lesson of humility that they boast too little of their work in the company of those academics who have never learned the lesson. In the essays collected here, writer after writer has praised the past great folklorists of the School, but none of them has pointed out that his or her own work displays the same greatness, for the same reasons: Katherine Campbell, Cathlin Macaulay, Margaret Mackay, Morag MacLeod, John Shaw, Doreen Waugh, and Gary West, whose work is presented in this book, share with their mentors absolute humility in the face of the traditions they have studied and absolute dedication to the 'island communities' that shape those traditions. Great singers and storytellers will always tell you that their

art pales in comparison to that of a neighbor or a parent, now gone, who was the greatest of all; just so the School folklorists whose work is published speak of greatness modestly, only in the past tense. But the knowledge and dedication that they have shared in their work reveal that the greatness continues.

Once more: to properly understand the folk whom you study, you must join them. And once you have joined them, you share a responsibility for them, an association that goes far beyond objectivity. In a recent article on the meaning of tradition, Dorothy Noyes has sought to discover the common ground among the various folk she has worked with, their shared sense of tradition. Tradition, she concludes, is the person-to-person transfer of something – "*A practice, a body of knowledge … a song*," a story: "*what is being transferred through the object is not … authority, which fetishizes the giver, nor property, which fetishizes the object while eventually debasing it into a commodity. Rather, the transfer is of responsibility*." One transfers "*the acceptance of responsibility to*" a group. This notion, she writes, "*resonates with the awareness of every performer I've ever encountered that tradition is not at bottom either a badge or pride or an inheritance to display but a job that must be done*" (Noyes 2009: 248). This sounds a bit Calvinistic, but I agree with her. Those who truly live their traditions will not be satisfied simply to proudly display them. They seek others who will continue the job of making the tradition live, others who "*will be willing and [right] to do the work*." Thus the song or story that is transferred is always transferred with a certain awareness – a knowledge of "*what it means, how it is to be used*," in short, the soul of the tradition is not the object itself "*but everything that is shaven off when it is packaged as a product or an entry in a database*." And that is why, as incomparably priceless as are the well-funded websites that now display the fruits of the School's hard labor, they reveal no more than half of the tradition. Scotland needs, and the world needs, the knowledge, the wisdom, the relationships lovingly cultivated between the tradition bearers and the members of the School. There is simply no substitute for that.

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