

THE SCOTS CANADIAN

Issue XXXII

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Spring 2011

Scottish Studies Foundation celebrates 25th Anniversary

REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Dear fellow members,

It was on May 13, 1986 that the Foundation was first incorporated as a registered Canadian charity thanks to the efforts of pioneering team comprising Harry Ferguson, Lawrence Henderson, Helga Loverseed, Hugh MacMillan, Bill Somerville and Dr. Paul Thompson all of whom recognized the need for an organization dedicated to the protection of the Scottish tradition in Canada at the academic level.

In the early years, the team's focus under the leadership of Harry Ferguson centered on the establishment of a structure aimed at achieving the major objective, which was to establish a chair of Scottish studies at the University of Guelph. During this time it became clear that raising the necessary funds was not going to be an easy task based in the practical reality that there were many other deserving charities out there competing for donations.

In the early 1990s, Bill Somerville was elected president and together with his team of directors established many of the activities that are still in place today. The newsletter was launched and a membership campaign initiated. In order to raise the Foundation's profile, a fundraising strategy was devised to complement rather than compete with the many other Scottish groups active across the country and this meant building fundraising efforts around events and activities that were not being utilized by others.

First, in 1992, came the Annual Tall Ship Cruise to commemorate the arrival of Scots pioneer ship "The Hector" which arrived in Nova Scotia in 1773. This event has been hugely successful and will be held again this year on Sunday, September 4. This was followed the following year by our first Tartan Day Celebration, when our first Scot of the Year Award was presented to Major-General Lewis MacKenzie.

In the intervening years, under the leadership of presidents Alan McKenzie, Dr. Edward Stewart, myself and now current president David Campbell, numerous events

have been sponsored and since 1994 the Chair of Scottish Studies at the University of Guelph has been in place in the person of Dr. Graeme Morton who came over from Edinburgh University.

Of course, all of our achievements over the last 25 years would not have been possible without the support of each and every one of our members and we do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend our Annual Meeting on April 9th. This is a good chance for us to tap into the ideas of our members as we chart our future direction.

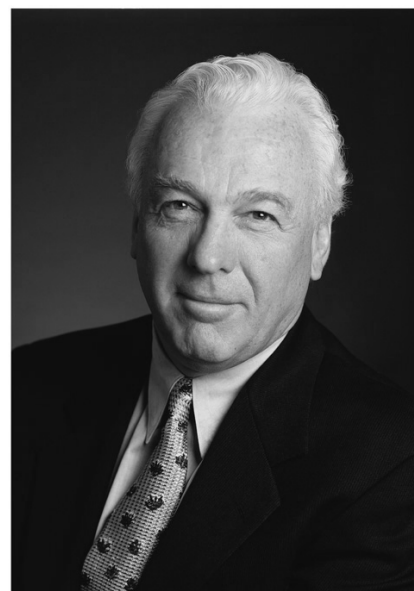
We also hope to see you at our Annual Tartan Day Celebration at Toronto's Granite Club on Tuesday April 5 when this year's Scot of the Year Award will be presented to Scots-Canadian mining engineer, businessman and philanthropist Robert M. Buchan who founded Kinross Gold in 1993, one of the largest gold mining companies in North America.

Born in Aberdeen and brought up in Rosyth, Fife, Mr. Buchan graduated with a B.Sc. (hons) in Mining Engineering from Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh in 1969 and in 1971 obtained a Masters in Mineral Economics from Queen's University, in Kingston.

In 2009 he donated \$10 million to Queen's University, the largest single donation to mining education in Canadian history. In September 2010 it was announced that Buchan was donating £1.3 million to his Scottish alma mater, to fund their work on sustainable energy engineering, the largest donation the university has ever received from an individual. He has also donated £650,000 to help establish the Whitlock Energy Collaboration Centre at Carnegie College in Fife, believed to be the largest single private individual donation to a Scottish college since the time of Andrew Carnegie.

From 1971 to 1974 Mr. Buchan worked as a design engineer at Joy Manufacturing and then as a Securities Analyst at A.E. Ames from 1974 to 1978 and at BBN from 1978 to 1984.

He participated in the formation of CMP Funds, and served as its President from 1984



Robert M. Buchan will receive the Scot of the Year Award on April 5

to 1988) and also participated in the creation of Dundee Bancorp in 1987 and served as its Vice-Chairman until 1994. During that period, he ran the merchant banking division, DCC Equities.

In 1994, he left Dundee to form Kinross Gold Corporation acting as that company's CEO from 1993 to 2004 and in 2005 he started Katanga Copper Company, and served as that company's Chairman until 2007 when he formed Allied Nevada Gold Corporation serving as that company's Chairman since inception.

Throughout Mr. Buchan's career, he has served on numerous boards of resource companies, as well as being Chairman of Quest Capital.

He has served on the foundations of Sunnybrook Hospital, the Art Gallery of Ontario and chaired a capital campaign for the CNIB (2005-2007). He has been elected to the Board of Trustees of Queen's University through 2014 and is a director of the Buchan Family Foundation, which is involved in a number of philanthropic causes and campaigns.

Should you wish to attend this function, please contact Gordon Paterson at 905-642-6262 or visit www.scottishstudies.com.

In the meantime, from all of us on the Board -- best wishes to you and your family and friends.

David Hunter

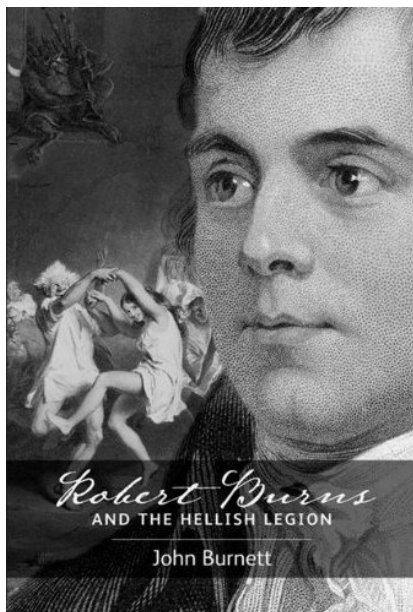
Scottish Studies Spring and Fall Colloquia attract key Academics

In keeping with the Foundation's 25th anniversary, we are delighted to have a number of distinguished academics from overseas and Canada at our events in 2011.

This year's Spring Colloquium will take place on April 9 at the University of Toronto's Knox College. Topics will include *Scots in the Atlantic World* and speakers will include John Burnett from the National Museums of Scotland, who will give a talk on Burns and the Supernatural.

John's recent book *Robert Burns and the Hellish Legion* explores the folk tales and beliefs, which are as important a part of cultural history as novels or organized religion. *Robert Burns and the Hellish Legion* explores some aspects of life in the world in which Burns lived and wrote, the supernatural beliefs which people held, and how they fitted into their everyday lives. It ends with a detailed discussion of *Tam o' Shanter*. Burns himself did not believe that the cloven-hoofed Devil appeared in Ayrshire, but he understood that other people did think that Satan walked the earth and witches were real, and that these were genuine beliefs stemming from the need to understand an inconsistent world.

Dr. Bruce Durie, whose talk is titled *Land, Law and Latin - the future of Genealogy*, was originally a biochemist/pharmacologist, teaching and researching in those disciplines at Edinburgh, Polytechnic of Central London, Kingston University and elsewhere, being awarded the IBRO/UNESCO



Fellowship in 1977 as "Scotland's most promising young neuroscientist." He later worked as Head of External Affairs at Kingston University, Director of the Edinburgh International Science Festival and Director of Development at Napier University, Edinburgh. He left Napier University to take up full-time writing and professional genealogy and now combines genealogical research on behalf of clients - mainly in the USA and Europe - with an academic position as Genealogy Coordinator for the University of Strathclyde, where he has set up postgraduate Certificate and Diploma courses in Genealogical Studies. He is also the official Archivist and Historian to the Chief of the Durie family and is writing a series of genealogical manuals and textbooks for a variety of publishers.

Dr. Femi J. Kolapo from the University of Guelph will give a talk on "Scottish Explorers, Missionaries and Colonial Agents in West Africa." Dr. Kolapo's current research includes an examination, on the one hand, of the social, political and economic implications in the first half of the 19th century in the Lower Niger and Niger Delta communities of West Africa of the conjunction between rural producers and marketers of palm oil, and on the other, the new global international economic demands and influences, together with its accompanying diplomatic and political impulses that began to emanate from industrialized capitalist Europe. He is also examining the dynamics involved in the relationship between Christian missionary organizations and their rural and other targets in West Africa during the same period.

Nadine Hunt from the University of Guelph-Humber will present *Scottish Trade Development in the Caribbean World via Jamaica, 1746-1800*. Ms. Hunt is the course instructor for the recently introduced Canadian Immigration and Identity Course (see page 3) and is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at York University and a recipient of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research of Canada's Doctoral Fellowship (2006-2008). Hunt's doctoral dissertation explores the importance of a Scottish trade Diaspora in Jamaica -- a study investigating 18th century social and economic life in the Caribbean and Atlantic worlds. Ms. Hunt's previous presentations include *Slaves, Contraband, and War: The Circum-Caribbean in the Long Eighteenth Century*.

Later this year, we are delighted to welcome back Professor T.C. Smout, who will present the annual Jill McKenzie Lecture at the Fall Colloquium on September 17. Professor Smout has been an important figure in the development both of Scottish historical studies and of the history of the environment. He was founder of the Institute

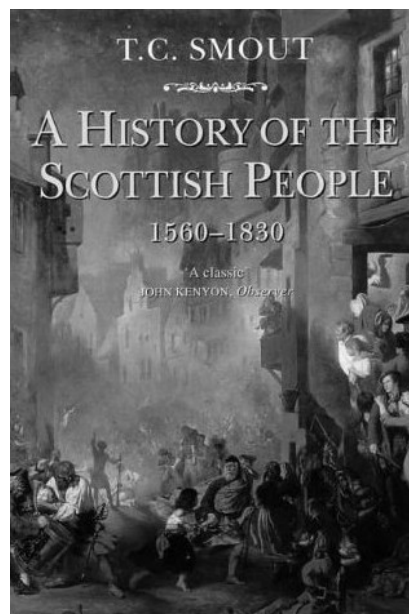


Professor T.C. Smout (left) with Alan McKenzie and Neil Fraser at the Scottish Studies "Oor Club" during his last visit to Canada

for Environmental History at St Andrews University.

Educated at The Leys School and Clare College, Cambridge, Professor Smout taught at the University of Edinburgh, from 1959 until 1980. At Edinburgh, he rose steadily through the academic ranks in the Department of Economic History before being appointed as Professor of Economic History in 1970. At St Andrews University from 1980 to 1991, he held the Chair of Scottish History and is now Professor Emeritus in History at St Andrews University.

Professor Smout has been a visiting professor at the University of Strathclyde since 1991 and has lectured in Japan, China, the United States, Canada and Australia. ■



Canadian Immigration and Identity Course gets underway at Guelph-Humber Campus

By Shirley Fraser

Thanks to an initial donation from the Scottish Studies Foundation, a new course in Canada's immigration literature and history has been created at the University of Guelph's Humber Campus and, as of September 2010, students were enrolled in the course.

"Creating this course is such a fantastic achievement by the Scottish Studies Foundation," said Scottish Studies Chair Dr. Graeme Morton. "With its support, we are able to offer a history of Canadian immigration that really speaks to the experiences of Toronto's diverse ethnic mix. The Scots are in there, of course, but so too are the migrants from the Caribbean, Asia, Eastern Europe and just about everywhere else. It places the history of Scottish immigration alongside those that came to Canada in different periods, for different reasons, and makes our understanding of our nation's history all the richer. Located in Toronto, the University of Guelph-Humber is a wonderful resource for the local community, and it's great that Scottish history is getting studied alongside other national and ethnic groups. From Dr. John Walsh, VP of Guelph-Humber, and myself our sincere thanks go to the SSF Board and all its members for such inspiring leadership."

In December, in response to an invitation from Guelph-Humber, Dr. Graeme Morton, Jenn Lorette (Alumni Affairs and Development, Guelph Univ.), and SSF Board Members Maggie McEwan and myself were able to attend a lecture from the course

entitled *Canadian Immigration & Identity*. It was an opportunity to meet students and to get their thanks, and those of the University, for this fantastic new development.

The course instructor is Nadine Hunt, a PhD candidate in the Department of History at York University and a recipient of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research of Canada's Doctoral Fellowship (2006-2008). Hunt's doctoral dissertation explores the importance of a Scottish trade Diaspora in Jamaica -- a study investigating 18th century social and economic life in the Caribbean and Atlantic worlds.

The class was composed of 20 students and the particular lecture we attended was entitled *Ethnic Pride: Parades, Carnivals and Cultural Associations in Canada*.

Throughout the PowerPoint presentation, interaction amongst the students was encouraged and the event discussed at length.

Included in the discussion was the Swedish Club of Victoria -- founded in 1956 and active for 25 years before being reorganized in the 1980s -- and the India-Canada Association. Based in Ottawa its purpose is to develop understanding between members of the Indian community and other nationalities interested in the Indian community.

Several festivals and cultural events were then presented and discussed. *Carabram*, established in 1982 is a festival dedicated to the preservation, development and promotion of the cultural heritages of the diverse ethnic communities in Brampton. Over 20 ethnic groups are involved in this event.

This was followed by a discussion of *Carassauga*, which was started in Mississauga 1985 and is an annual event showcasing various ethnic groups in international pavilions.

In 1994 *Pilaros Taste of the Danforth* was launched and is now held every August in Toronto thanks to sponsorship by an international company. The theme here is

Mediterranean food, mostly Greek in origin.

Also in Toronto, *The Polish Festival at Roncesvalles* is held every September sponsored by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland. The event features a parade, Polish music and, of course, Polish food.

Other Toronto events include the *CHIN Picnic*, started in 1966 by the Lombardi family and named for the radio station they owned. Organized around Canada Day at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, it originally catered to the Italian community, but now embraces European and Mediterranean cultures, and features performers and food from many ethnic backgrounds.

In 1991 *Arofest* was established as a Canada Day event and attracts many sponsors, African performers and African musicians.

Caribana dates back to 1967 and started with a government grant and is now sponsored by Scotiabank. It is a huge festival in Toronto similar to the Trinidadian Festival where a 'King' and 'Queen' are crowned.

The consensus of opinion among students was that attending these events gives a better understanding of the culture of different ethnic groups. The students participated in the discussions regarding their experiences in attending some of these events. And positive and negative aspects of the larger events were also discussed.

Dr. Graeme Morton explained our Foundation's involvement in the University of Guelph, and there were high-spirited conversations with him. He deftly avoided the question about what Scotsmen wear under their kilts!

One young man admitted that he didn't even know that the Scots were involved in the development of Canada, until he took the course. Prior to that, when he thought of Canada, it was only the English and the French that came to mind. Fortunately, in

taking the course, he did learn about Scottish immigrants as one of the required course textbooks is *An unstoppable Force: The Scottish Exodus to Canada*, by Lucille H. Campey.

SSF Director, Maggie McEwan explained how it was our participation in various City of Toronto organized bingo events that made it financially possible for us to support this particular educational endeavour.

It was an enjoyable evening, and the students seemed to welcome our presence. And, of course, we all posed for the inevitable photo when the class ended. ■



The inaugural "Canadian Immigration & Identity" class with Nadine Hunt (at front with scarf) Also present Dr. Graeme Morton (tallest at back), Shirley Fraser (left of Ms. Hunt) and Maggie McEwan (top row, second from right)

Bobby Brown – a legend in his own time.

As an individual performer, member of two Scottish country dance bands, musical director of the internationally renowned fiddle troupe *The Cape Breton Symphony* and current leader of *The Scottish Accent*, Bobby Brown has been a leading proponent of Scottish Country Dance and traditional Scottish music in Canada, the United States, Britain and Europe for 50 years. Moreover, he is actively engaged in the perpetuation and expansion of this Scottish Heritage by encouraging young Canadian musicians to learn and preserve the traditional songs and tunes to that heritage.

Robert Watt Brown was born in Dennyloanhead, Scotland in 1941. His father, John Brown, as a young man, spent time in Canada where he tried his luck searching for gold in the Yukon. Perhaps this early adventuring may have implanted some prenatal urge among his children to return to seek their pot of gold and rainbow's end in Canada, for Bobby and his two sisters, Christine and Jean, subsequently all made their homes in Canada. Bobby's second name, Watt, is a label to be worn proudly. A distant relative among his forebears was James Watt (1736-1819), whom everyone knows as the inventor of the steam engine.

Bobby grew up in a family devoted to the field of Scottish musical entertainment. His mother, Jean Day, was widely known throughout Scotland as a concert soprano, often performing with Harry Lauder and Will Fyffe. His father was a fiddler, and several uncles were pipers and drummers. Uncle John Day formed one of the early dance bands. As children of a nationally known singer and a father who was a "passing fair" violinist, it is not surprising that Bobby and his sisters all had music lessons. As a wee boy, Bobby played the mouth organ, but later his instrument was the piano. It was not until he went to Canada and could only afford to buy an accordion that he learned to play one – mainly self-taught.

In 1957, Bobby Brown emigrated from Scotland to Canada where he joined his sister Christine. He brought with him his knowledge and love of traditional Scottish music, coming from a family of musicians. Starved for his native music, Bobby befriended pipers and drummers in the local pipe band and shortly after, began taking accordion lessons. Through his other sister Jean, he met a trio of Scots musicians who had begun to play for Country Dancing in

Hamilton. Two of these, newly arrived in Canada also, were living in London, Ontario – Stan Hamilton and Bobby Frew. One thing led to another and soon Bobby Brown had been added to this trio as second accordionist. Up to this point in his life the accordion had been a plaything, now here was the challenge to become its master. Here too was the opportunity to delve deeply into the rich treasures of the traditional Scottish music that provides a unique setting for its national dancing.

What followed is part of Scottish Country Dance history. For the next seventeen years, the two Bobbys and Stan Hamilton, with an evolving back-row of bass and drum players (of whom Don Wood and Fred Collins are known as the most outstanding and still play with Bobby in *The Scottish Accent* band today) comprised "the great band" known as *The Clansman* to become later *The Flying Scotsmen*. Despite a full-time career in the engineering industry, Bobby maintained a grueling schedule as an individual performer and as a key member of one of North America's most respected bands. This band made appearances at the New York World's Fair, Grand Bahamas hotel, Scottish Country Dance functions, Burns Suppers, Highland Games, Celtic heritage festivals across Canada and USA and on national television.

By the 1970s Bobby Brown was developing additional musical interests. He had become acquainted with many of the old-time fiddlers, who among other things, congregate annually at Shelburne, Ontario, not far from Bobby's home in Brampton. In 1973, he was invited to share with the celebrated folk singer and entertainer John Allan Cameron in arranging, producing and performing in a musical series on the national CBC television network and later on CTV. Bobby was instrumental in the formation of *The Cape Breton Symphony Fiddlers*, a unique group of four Nova Scotian musicians specializing in the Cape Breton style of Scottish fiddle music, who performed regularly on the show. They also appeared many times on other television variety shows, including *The Tommy Hunter Show* and *Bob McLean Show*, and at the annual Canada Day celebrations at the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa. Bobby has always had an affinity with fiddlers, enjoyed playing the piano and producing albums for them.



Bobby Brown playing at the Scottish Studies Society's Tartan Day Celebration in 2006

Other touring and broadcasting opportunities followed so that by 1976 Bobby made the crucial decision to become a full-time professional musician and to leave the Stan Hamilton band, to more easily schedule his own musical activities. Bobby was given the opportunity to become heavily involved in folk music (television and tours) as an entertainer manager, but it would mean leaving Scottish music, as there would no time to commit to dates. Despite the lure of huge salaries and fame in folk music, deep down Bobby knew that he wanted to play the music he loved most – Scottish music. He took a huge financial risk, leaving a full-time management position and giving up folk music opportunities to pursue his one true love – Scottish music. Very soon afterwards, his own Scottish country dance band known as *The Scottish Accent* was formed. This band plays all over North America – from east to west and north to south – and travels extensively in all types of weather to bring live music to dancers. It has become the leading Scottish country dance band in North America.

The field of traditional Scottish and country dance music is outside the popular mainstream and few performers are willing to commit their careers to this type of artistic expression, which requires specialized historic knowledge and a high level of musical proficiency. Consequently Bobby and his band have traveled extensively to support a variety of Scottish cultural events with their authentic traditional live music in strict tempo. The band also contributes its considerable entertainment appeal to free concerts at senior citizens homes, community gatherings and fundraisers.

As a composer and arranger in his own right, Bobby maintains one of the few original manuscript libraries of traditional Scottish Music in the world. This is a rich resource, which is utilized constantly during preparations for both live performances and

numerous recordings for which this individual has always demanded strict quality and integrity. Bobby has been involved in the production and arranging of over 100 recordings of Scottish Canadian Music by various artists. With his own band, *The Scottish Accent* and *The Cape Breton Symphony*, he has now recorded over 20 albums, with special guests including Alasdair Fraser, Graham Townsend, John Allan Cameron, and Christine Scott. He has worked on stage with other Scottish and Canadian performers such as Moira Anderson, Andy Stewart, Hamish Imlach, Robin Brock, Alex Beaton, Peter Glen, John Carmichael, Billy Meek, Rita McNeil, Edith Butler, The Rankins, Ashley MacIsaac and has appeared on numerous television and radio broadcasts. His production company, Brownrigg Productions, also leased the rights to several popular Scottish LPs and manufactured and marketed them in Canada under his label. These included popular artists such as Jimmy Shand, Jim MacLeod, and Ron Gonnella. Bobby has toured Britain and parts of Europe with both *The Scottish Accent* band and *The Cape Breton Symphony Fiddlers*, and other artists to marvelous reviews.

As well, with grant support from the Canadian government, he has taken musical shows to West Germany and Ireland and has toured across Canada. In 1984 he was invited with supporting players to perform at the University Games in Edmonton, winning commendations from the honorary patrons of the occasion, TRH The Prince and Princess of Wales. He has shared his love for Scottish music with audiences at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, The Alaska State Fair, the Pan Celtic Festival, Scottish World Festival at the Canadian National Exhibition and numerous folk festivals and fairs across Canada. *The Scottish Accent* band was the first and only band in North America to broadcast live from Toronto for BBC's *Take The Floor* and was also the only band outside Scotland to record for the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

Still today, Bobby plays regularly for Scottish Country Dance events – workshops, dances, classes, candidate's exams and balls, across North America. T.A.C. (Teacher's Association Canada) annually runs a weeklong summer school, and Bobby Brown and *The Scottish Accent* provide music for both social dancing and for classes each year. His band is known for their unique sound and energy with a good drive and rock solid tempo. Bobby's encyclopedic knowledge and his love of traditional Scottish music make his work and his band's music stand apart.

His arrangements and settings have made *The Scottish Accent* band tremendously successful. Bobby has given many workshops for musicians during Summer

School and Thistle School (North Carolina) as well as in various other places, providing leadership and encouragement to others to keep Scottish traditional music alive. He has accomplished this latter, by helping with the production of recordings of other musicians and has passed his love of traditional Scottish music and heritage to his son, Laird. Laird is now not only second accordion player for *The Scottish Accent* but is actively involved in playing for classes around North America and assisting his father in the studio with the production and arranging of various musical projects. Bobby has just recently produced Laird's first album as a lead player.

In the last few years, Bobby's great concern with maintaining the standards of "real" Scottish music as opposed to what many consider the real thing has encouraged him to take on the onerous job of tutor, teaching young musicians what makes for really good traditional Scottish music. His real concern with maintaining the highest standard is beginning to produce some visible results in the United States. Other musicians who have played with him over the years in his band, or been under his tutelage as "apprentices" have gone on to become professional musicians or form their own band or be part of a band playing Scottish music, particularly in the United States. Including for example, Paul Langley (principal bassist of Canadian Opera Company and National Ballet of Canada), Jim Creegan (bass of Barenaked Ladies), Rob Wolanski (principal bass of Hamilton Philharmonic), Steve Ozorak (accordion for Music Makars in USA), Barbara McGowan, Mara Shea, (both fiddlers in USA). Understanding that cultural preservation is dependent upon the devoted cultivation and transition of knowledge, Bobby has encouraged and taught many young Canadians in their pursuit of excellence in the field of Scottish music. At workshops and classes, Bobby sets aside his performer responsibilities to become an engaging teacher and eagerly instructs participants in the subtle idiomatic nuances of traditional Scottish music. Recently he has started writing articles for RSCDS branch newsletters in the hopes of educating dancers about the music they are dancing to.

Bobby has always kept his finger on the pulse of music in Scotland. Besides the tours of Scotland he organized, he visits regularly. He also maintains constant contact with many friends in Scotland, who are also bandleaders and involved in Scottish music. His CDs are available in Scotland and are featured on BBC Scotland radio broadcasts, particularly *Take The Floor*. Many of the younger bandleaders are well aware of Bobby Brown's influence on Scottish traditional music, particularly dance bands.

Bobby has devoted his life to the playing, researching, recording and teaching of Scottish Dance Music. He loves playing and Scottish music is in his soul.

Ed: Thanks to John D. and Catherine Shaw for sending us this article.

The Curious Predictions of The Brahan Seer - Scotland's Nostradamus

by D. Sealgair

Throughout the ages, people have always been intrigued with the idea that it might be possible for certain people to foresee the future and in olden days, when superstition rivaled reason, Scotland was no exception.

Indeed one of the most fascinating characters to emerge from the Scottish Highlands in the 1600s was one Kenneth Mackenzie, originally known in Gaelic as "Coinneach Odhar" or in English "Kenneth the Sallow." Born at Baile-na-Cille, in the Parish of Uig on the Island of Lewis, about the beginning of the 17th century, he moved to Loch Ussie near Dingwall in Ross-shire and worked as a laborer on the Brahan estate, seat of the Seaforth chieftains, from somewhere around 1675. In time was to become better known as "The Brahan Seer."

According to legend, it was through his mother that he was given the "second sight", the ability to see both this world and another world at the same time. The story goes that at a graveyard one night when ghosts were believed to roam the earth, his mother encountered the ghost of a Danish princess on her way back to her grave. In order to allow her to pass back into the grave, Kenneth's mother demanded that the princess should pay a tribute, and asked that her son should be given the second sight. Later that day, Kenneth found a small stone with a hole in the middle, through which he would look and see visions, many of which were written down and have since turned out to be correct.

On passing by Culloden near Inverness he recorded these words... "Oh! Drumossie, thy bleak moor shall, ere many generations have passed away, be stained with the best blood of the Highlands. Glad am I that I will not see the day, for it will be a fearful period; heads will be lopped off by the score, and no mercy shall be shown or quarter given on either side..." a curious and accurate prediction of the 1746 Battle of Culloden.

He prophesied that "streams of fire and water will run beneath the streets of Inverness and into every house" and that "great black, bridleless horses, belching fire and steam will draw lines of carriages

through the glens" and "a black rain will bring riches to Aberdeen." 200 years later, gas and water pipes were laid down, railways were built throughout the Highlands and 300 years later North Sea oil was being pumped ashore.

Sometimes his prophecies were remarkably detailed. Pointing to a field far from seashore, loch or river, he said that a ship would anchor there one day. "A village with four churches will get another spire," said Coinneach, "and a ship will come from the sky and moor at it." This happened in 1932 when an airship made an emergency landing and was tied up to the spire of the new church!

He spoke of the day when Scotland would once again have its own Parliament but that this would only come when men could walk dry shod from England to France. Strangely enough, the opening of the Channel Tunnel in 1994 was followed a few years later by the opening of the first Scottish Parliament since 1707.

At the height of his fame and powers, he made his most notorious prediction and one which would ultimately cost him his life. Isabella, wife of the Earl of Seaforth and said to be one of the ugliest women in Scotland, asked for his advice. She wanted news of her husband who was on a visit to Paris. He reassured her that the Earl was in good health but refused to elaborate further.

This enraged Isabella, who demanded that he tell her everything or she would have him killed. Coinneach told her that her husband was with another woman, fairer than herself, and then went on to foretell the end of the Seaforth line, with the last heir being deaf and dumb. Isabella was so incensed by this that she had Coinneach seized and thrown head first into a barrel of boiling tar!

True to prediction, Francis Humberston Mackenzie, deaf and dumb from scarlet fever as a child, inherited the Seaforth title in 1783. He had four children who died prematurely and the line did indeed come to an end. Whilst the legend of the Brahan Seer is well known in folklore, there is no documentation of a Coinneach Odhar ever having existed in the Highlands during the 17th century. But there is in the 16th century. Parliamentary records from 1577 show that two writs were issued for the arrest of the "principal enchanter" Coinneach Odhar, reputedly a gypsy who supplied poison to a Catherine Ross, who wished to remove the rivals to the inheritance of her sons. She had already recruited some 26 witches who had failed. The police were called and records show that while many of the witches were caught and burnt, what happened to Coinneach remains a mystery. If he was caught it is likely that he too would have been burnt, which reflects the legend that he was burnt in a spiked tar barrel.

There is a stone slab by the lighthouse at Chanonry Point, near Fortrose, that is said to mark the spot where he died. The inscription reads, "This stone commemorates the legend of Coinneach Odhar better known as the Brahan Seer - Many of his prophecies were fulfilled and tradition holds that his untimely death by burning in tar followed his final prophecy of the doom of the House of Seaforth." ■

Manners in Scotland

Written by the Reverend Adam Petrie in 1720

When the Reverend Adam Petrie had time on his hands awaiting a charge, he wrote a manual of manners as a guide for young people. On the subject of seemly conduct, he believed that, "Art corrects what is bad, and helps to perfect what is good; without which a man is clownish in everything he sets about." He took manners very seriously indeed, suggesting that, as seen in one example he offers, it could be a matter of life and death.

If one be sleeping in the fields, you are not to go near him except he be your acquaintance, lest some have seen him before you that have exercised too much familiarity with his pocket, and you be suspected by him.

If you pass by one using nature, you should turn your face another way, and should not so much as look at him. If you can evite [avoid] passing by him, it is better.

If you be to travel in a coach, let your superiors enter first; and when you enter, take the worst place.

If you are about to travel on horseback, let your superiors be first mounted, and inferiors should first dismount to be ready to give assistance.

In travelling, keep a little behind your superior; if your station be such as you may ride up with him, then place yourself on his left hand; and if there be three in company, let the next eminent person place himself on his right hand, and the other on his left. If you be to pass a river where there may be danger, go first; and if after, keep some distance from him, so that you may not dirty him.

It is civil not to sit too long in a room with ladies, and to leave them a little after they have come off a journey or when they are to take a journey; neither is it convenient to suffer them to ride too far, and not to have access to be alone; for if there be no houses on the way, then they may cause them light at some place where they may conveniently retire from the company, so that they may have their own freedom; tho' I am not for men showing them the reason of making them light, for this would put them to the

blush. Some such expression may be used, as, "Let us allow the horses to breath a little." I have heard of a modest lady, who in riding with an inconsiderate person lost her life.

Do not smell at what you eat or drink; and it is most rude to do it to what another eats or drinks.

If it be enquired what you are for you must answer, "What you please." If there be ladies, let them have a share of all that's presented. If a lady with child long for anything, she may frankly desire the same (but modestly) whatever she is; for some have smarted severely for their folly.

Make no noise with your spoon or knife. It is rude to sup your meat out of the spoon with an ungrateful noise.

Do not bite your bread into pieces, nor fruit &c. but cut or break the same: neither must you keep your knife always in your hand.

It is indecent to fill the mouth too full; such cramming is more suitable to a beast than a rational creature.

Put not both your hands to your mouth at once. Be sure to throw nothing on the floor, 'tis uncivil and disobliging.

It is clownish to pick the shells of an egg with your fingers: pare it with your knife. It is better to pick out an egg from the shell with bread.

Do not lick your fingers, nor dirty your napkin.

If you have occasion to wipe your nose, or the sweat from your face, hold up your napkin betwixt you and the company: and do it with as little noise as possible with your handkerchief. To wipe the nose or sweat of the face with a table napkin is most rude.

Be sure to wipe your mouth before you drink, and when you drink hold in your breath till you are done. I have seen some colour the glass with their breath, which is certainly very loathsome to the company to think that they must drink out of the same glass.

It is unbecoming in church to have their eyes running hither and thither. It shows an unstable heart. Nor must you move your body in an unseemly manner.

It is rude to laugh, sleep, or whisper others in the ear in time of divine worship, or in time of sermon.

It is rude to come to church in gaudy dress. A grave decent apparel is most suitable for the house of God. I do not plead but that persons may be arranged according to their rank and station; but that they should not have a light dress, such as bare shoulders and bare breasts or anything that is indecent.

It is uncivil for persons to seek out the weak places in a sermon to expose the preacher. This is no sign of piety or wit.

From Scotland, the Autobiography edited by Rosemary Goring, Viking/Penguin Books 2007.

Scotland's Bell Rock Lighthouse celebrates 200 years of operation

This year, on February 1, approximately 5,000 people gathered in Arbroath on the east coast of Scotland to watch a spectacular fireworks display commemorating the first light emitted from the Bell Rock Lighthouse on February 1, 1811.

The lighthouse is the world's oldest surviving sea-washed lighthouse and was built on Bell Rock (also known as Inchcape) in the North Sea, 12 miles off the coast of Angus. At 115 feet high, the light is visible from 35 miles inland.

The name goes back to the 14th century when an abbot from Arbroath abbey arranged for a warning bell to be fastened to the reef so as to respond to movements of the waves. The bell lasted only one year before a Dutch pirate stole it.

The masonry work on which the lighthouse rests was constructed to such a high standard that it has not been replaced or adapted in almost 200 years. The lamps and reflectors were replaced in 1843, with the original equipment being used in the lighthouse at Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland where they are currently on display. The working of the lighthouse has been automated since 1988.

The lighthouse operated in tandem with a shore station, the Bell Rock Signal Tower, built in 1813 at the mouth of Arbroath harbour. Today this building houses the Signal Tower Museum, a visitor centre detailing the history of the lighthouse.

The challenges faced in the building of the lighthouse have led to it being described as one of the Seven Wonders of the Industrial World.

Prior to the lighthouse being built, the rock was the scene of many shipwrecks as it lies just below the surface of the sea for all but a few hours at low tide.

By the turn of the 18th century, it was estimated that the rocks were responsible for the wrecking of up to six ships every winter. In one storm alone, 70 ships were lost off the east coast of Scotland.

The Scottish engineer Robert Stevenson (father of author Robert Louis Stevenson) had proposed the construction of a lighthouse on Bell Rock in 1799, but cost concerns and the relatively radical nature of his proposal caused it to be shelved. However, the loss of the warship HMS York and all on board in 1804 resulted in a furor in Parliament, which eventually led to legislation being passed in 1806 enabling construction to begin.

Stevenson built the lighthouse between 1807 and 1810 and the lamp was first lit on February 1, 1811. The design has some

similarities to the earlier Eddystone Lighthouse designed by John Smeaton which was also built on an offshore reef using interlocking stones, but also contained newer features, such as rotating lights alternating between red and white.

Later, the Chief Engineer on the project, John Rennie, disputed the amount of credit that Stevenson received for the design, claiming that Stevenson's curve on the base of the lighthouse was inappropriate, even although Stevenson had previously used similar designs based on the Eddystone.

During construction Stevenson hired 60 men, including a blacksmith so that the pick axes used to cut the foundations could be re-sharpened on site -- Stevenson avoided the use of gunpowder in case it damaged the rock on which the lighthouse was to stand. They initially set sail on August 17, 1807, to be away for two months. Much to their displeasure, Stevenson requested, in order for the lighthouse to be completed in time and on budget that they work on the Sabbath. Despite Stevenson's insistence that they were doing the Lord's work, most of the men refused on the grounds that such an action would be ill received by God.

For 20 hours of each day, while the rock was covered by up to 12 feet of water, the men lived on the "Smeaton," a ship moored a mile off the rock. The first task was to build a beacon house on tall wooden struts, so the men would have a place to stay on the island, instead of the time-consuming row to and from the ship each day and after an incident when disaster almost struck.

This happened when the "Smeaton" accidentally broke free from her mooring, and before long had drifted some three miles to leeward. Stevenson could see that there was no chance of her getting back to the Bell Rock before it was completely overflowed by the tide.

There were 32 men on the rock that morning with only two small boats, each capable of carrying in safety only eight men. Just when Stevenson was about to alert the men to their desperate situation, a large boat suddenly appeared through the haze. It was the timely, if not unexpected, arrival of James Spink, the Bell Rock pilot with some letters from Arbroath. His appearance at the rock that day certainly saved many lives, and in recognition the Board awarded him a small lifetime pension. The consequence of that narrow escape was understandable; 18 men refused to embark for the rock the following day.

During the Spring of 1808, work resumed. The beacon house barracks was completed



The Bell Rock Lighthouse, Photo: © Ian Cowe

and the first three courses of stone were laid. In the whole of the second season, there were only 80 hours of building work completed on the rock. During this time, before the barracks were completed, a young worker was knocked unconscious by a buoy ring and drowned. The boy was the prime breadwinner for the family; so Stevenson offered the now-vacant position to Alexander Scott, the younger brother of the drowned worker, who accepted.

The beacon house withstood a heavy storm, and due to this, the men agreed to work on the Sabbath. Although they did not have faith in Stevenson initially, his design soon redeemed their faith.

In 1809, Stevenson was frustrated by a visit by Rennie, whom he saw as interfering with his work. As a strategy to ward off further visits, he wrote Rennie a total of 82 letters, asking detailed questions about a large range of construction issues (including what type of window putty and locks to use). Rennie replied in detail to every letter, but Stevenson largely ignored his replies.

During this time a worker by the name of Wishart had his legs crushed in an accident, preventing him from working further on the project. He asked Stevenson if he could be appointed lighthouse keeper and this was ultimately arranged.

Work stopped on 22 August 1809 with a large part of the tower completed.

During this final period of construction the lighthouse became something of a tourist attraction. Many people were anxious to see the completion of the tallest offshore lighthouse in the world.

In this final season, while the men were staying in the beacon house, a major storm struck. Worker Charles Henderson was lost and his body never found.

Work was finally completed, with a total of about 2500 granite stones used during the construction, all of them carried by a single horse named Bassey. ■

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