

FEAR BEAG A' CHRIDHE MHÒIR



CONFERENCE: LIFE AND LEGACY OF CALUM MACLEAN

Conference Programme
Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies
27 George Square, University of Edinburgh

09:30m–06:00f, Disathairne 23 Samhain 2013
09:30am–06:00pm, Saturday 23 November 2013

*Tha an saoghal fhathast àlainn
ged nach eil thu ann...*
Somhairle MacGill-Eain

*The world is still beautiful
though you are not in it...*
Sorley MacLean

Conference Programme

Presentations of various aspects of Calum Maclean's life and legacy will be showcased during this one-day conference. Raasay-born Calum Maclean (1915–1960) was one of the foremost folklorists and ethnologists of his generation. Considered to be one of the finest twentieth-century collectors of Scottish traditions, Maclean in his short life amassed thousands upon thousands of items ranging from short anecdotes about fairy lore to the longest ever story to have been recorded in Western Europe.

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2013

09:30 Open / Registration

10:00 Cailean Maclean

10:30 John Shaw

11:00 John MacInnes

11:30 Break

12:00 Kenny Beaton

12:30 Lunch Buffet

02:00 Andrew Wiseman

03:00 Viewing of the documentary Fear Beag a' Chridhe Mhòir [The Little One of the Big Heart]

04:00 Discussion about Calum Maclean's life and legacy

04:30 Recital by Allan MacDonald of a Lament for Calum Maclean by Francis Collinson

05:00 Wine Reception

06:00 Break

08:00 Concert at St. Cecilia's, Cowgate

10:00 Close

Kenny Beaton, University of Edinburgh: ‘Guth Chaluim: The Voice of Calum Maclean’

Abstract:

A look at the Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches website, in particular tracks collected by Calum Maclean and one or two where Calum is also the contributor rather than his usual role of being the collector. Many of the tracks we do not hear Calum’s voice at all – we only hear the contributor. Calum’s work contributed a huge amount of material to the School of Scottish Studies Archive and is one of the biggest contributors in the TAD archive, if not the biggest, featuring on over 3,000 tracks, representing some 10% of the project’s current published tracks.

Biography

Kenny Beaton was formerly the Technical Manager of the innovative and pioneering Tobar an Dualchais/Kist o Riches project and oversaw the digitisation and preservation of around 12,000 hours of audio material, of which some 34,000 tracks are now available online. He also oversaw the development of the website and supporting technical infrastructure. Kenny is a Gaelic speaker from Stoneybridge, South Uist.

Cailean Maclean, Skyemedia, Isle of Skye: ‘Kindling Ancient Memory: Calum Maclean and his Family’

Abstract

This illustrated talk will focus members of Calum’s family who were either noted folklore sources or folklore collectors and, in one case in particular, both. Many of his aunts and uncles were singers and storytellers. From that generation Alasdair (Alexander) Nicolson was an exception in that he undertook a considerable amount of collection. It is likely that he was a significant factor in encouraging Calum and his siblings in their collecting endeavours.

Biography

Cailean Maclean is a nephew of Calum Iain and has taken a keen interest in his life and work. Born and bred in the Outer Hebrides, Cailean now lives in Skye where he works as a photographer and broadcaster.

Publications

‘Kindling Ancient Memory / a’ beothachadh na cuimhne aosda’ in *The Carrying Stream Flows On* ed. by Bob Chambers (Kershader: The Islands Books Trust, 2013), pp. 34–43

‘A’ beothachadh na cuimhne aosda, Calum Iain MacGhilleathain (1915-1960): bho Alba gu Èirinn’, *Béaloides*, vol. 79 (2011), pp. 1–21

John MacInnes, University of Edinburgh: ‘Some Superstitious Beliefs in Scottish Gaelic Tradition’

Abstract

This short chat will offer a brief view of certain beliefs – for example, second sight, dream lore, ghosts and fetches – that have flourished in Gaelic society. Anecdotes will be drawn from the speaker’s own family tradition.

Biography

Described as “the last of the native scholars”, Dr John MacInnes is the foremost living authority on the oral tradition of the Scottish Highlands. Having spent some five decades recording tradition bearers from all over Scotland and Canada on behalf of the School of Scottish Studies, he writes eloquently on an inheritance analysed with intellectual rigour. His interests are eclectic

and take in many aspects of life, history and literature of the Scottish Highlands, from clan sagas to Clearances, from the supernatural to Sorley MacLean. Born in Uig, Lewis, in 1930, John MacInnes spent most of his childhood on Skye and Raasay. There he acquired a keen interest in the traditional songs, folktales and culture of the Scottish Highlands, which led him towards formal study and the awards of degrees and distinctions at Edinburgh University. He was appointed to the School of Scottish Studies in 1958, and continued there until his retirement in 1993.

Publications

Dùthchas nan Gàidheal: Selected Essays of John MacInnes, ed. by Michael Newton (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006)

John Shaw, University of Edinburgh: ‘Local Traditions, Wider Contexts: Calum Maclean in the Rough Bounds’

Abstract

Through his fieldwork in the ‘Rough Bounds’ of the *Gàidhealtachd*, Moidart and Morar, during the 1950s, Calum Maclean provided access for folklorists to the living traditions of a region with close links to the more famous collecting grounds of South Uist. Some of the recorded items, which include songs, international tales, legends, belief in the supernatural, oral history and instrumental music, he made widely available in his book *The Highlands*. Concentrating on selected items from his fieldwork, together with their associated traditions, I will discuss the significance of his work in the region within the wider context of Gaelic folklore.

Biography

John Shaw is formerly Senior Lecturer in Ethnology at the School of Scottish Studies, and as an Honorary Fellow currently edits *Scottish Studies*. He has undertaken extensive fieldwork in Nova Scotia and Scotland. His research interests include but are not limited to Gaelic Ethnology (Oral Narrative, Song and Traditional Music); social contexts of storytelling and songs; native taxonomies; Scottish Gaelic emigrant traditions; and the interface between academic research and language/cultural maintenance and development.

Publications

(ed.), *The Blue Mountains and Other Gaelic Stories from Cape Breton / Na Beanntaichean Gorma agus Sgeulachdan Eile à Ceap Breatainn* (Montréal; London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007)

(ed.), *Brìgh an Òrain / A Story in Every Song: The Songs and Tales of Lauchie MacLellan* (Montréal; London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000)

(ed.), *Sgeul gu Latha / Tales Until Dawn: The World of a Cape Breton Gaelic Story-Teller* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1987)

Andrew Wiseman, University of Edinburgh: ‘The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Or When Folklorists Fall Out’

Abstract

This paper will explore in detail the dynamic relationship of three folklore collectors with regard to the access, ownership and copyright of oral materials that emerged by the 1950s in Scotland. Controversy erupted at the very inception of the University of Edinburgh’s School of Scottish Studies in 1951 that caused a short if vitriolic exchange of views between two of Scotland’s most prolific collectors: Calum Maclean and John Lorne Campbell. The catalyst that caused the rift was none other than Alan Lomax who had come to collect material for a proposed Scottish version of the World Albums of Folk and Primitive Music. Maclean on his return to his native

Scotland from his 'exile' in Ireland first became acquainted with Campbell in 1946. Their mutual interest guaranteed not only friendship but also a beneficial working relationship. The dynamic of their relationship was put severely to the test on the arrival of Texan-born Lomax to the Scottish scene in 1951. Differences of temperament, in ideological outlook with regard to folklore research ethics and commercial copyright issues, inform the reasons for the falling out of Lomax and Campbell into which Maclean been unwittingly embroiled.

Biography

Andrew Wiseman is a Research Associate on the Calum Maclean Project based at the School of Scottish Studies and twice a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, gaining a doctorate about hunting in the Scottish Highlands. He has published many peer-reviewed and popular articles on various aspects of Gaelic cultural history, including aspects of Calum Maclean's career, and is currently editing *The Highlands and Selected Writings of Calum I. Maclean*.

Publications

'The people never seem to lose their charm': Calum Iain Maclean in Clonmel', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2012), pp. 112–32

'Fear Beag a' Chridhe Mhòir: The Life and Legacy of Calum Iain Maclean (1915–1960),' in Kenneth E. Nilsen (ed.), *Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 5: Fifth Scottish Gaelic Research Conference* (Sydney, N.S.: Cape Breton University Press, 2010), pp. 280–98

THE CALUM MACLEAN PROJECT

The concert aims to give a taste of the musical world in which Calum Maclean collected initially for the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC) and then for the School of Scottish Studies. Raasay-born Maclean (1915–1960) was one of the foremost folklorists and ethnologists of his generation. Considered to be one of the finest twentieth-century collection of Scottish traditions, Maclean in his short life amassed thousands upon thousands of items ranging from short anecdotes about fairy lore to the longest ever story to have been recorded in Western Europe

After graduating with a first in Celtic Studies from the University of Edinburgh in 1939, Maclean gained two scholarships to further his studies at University College Dublin. Due to the intervention of the Second World War his scholarships came to an end and so Maclean had to find another means of livelihood. At first he travelled to the west coast of Ireland and with relative ease he became fluent in Irish. His contacts back in Dublin stood him in good stead, and through the recommendation of Thomas Waldron, he was offered a part-time post as a collector in 1942. Over the next two years he sent six volumes of southern Connemara lore back to Dublin.

By 1946, it was decided, much to Maclean's chagrin, to send him back to his native Scotland in order to collect the fast-dying Gaelic traditions then current in the Hebrides. Such was the success of pilot project in his native Raasay, Maclean became a permanent resident back in Scotland and as an employee of the IFC would collect a massive amount of material that he diligently collected throughout the Highlands and Islands but mainly in the Gaelic-speaking and predominantly Catholic islands of South Uist, Benbecula and Barra.

On the foundation of the School of Scottish Studies in 1951, Maclean was appointed its first Research Fellow and Collector. Over the next few years Maclean would continue collect throughout Scotland, from Braemar to Barra, and from the Borders to Shetland. Maclean was struck down by illness in 1956 necessitating the amputation of his left arm the following year. Even with the onset of cancer that was to end his life, he continued to work and remain cheerful under extremely adverse circumstances that reflected a strength of character that belied his small stature.

Sadly, Maclean's only major publication was *The Highlands* (1959), and what may be described as an uncompromising view of the Highland people, history and culture from the perspective of an insider, a Gaelic-speaking Scot, received many favourable reviews on publication. Apart from a modest amount of academic papers and popular publications, due to the amount of time spent in recording, and the concomitant task of transcription and indexing, Maclean's foremost legacy is his vast collection of mainly Gaelic oral tradition carried out in the field over a fourteen-year period (1946–1960). The vast majority of the collection was made in the Southern Hebrides and on the mainland Scottish Highlands. Maclean was always conscious of being a successor to those great collectors who had gone before him. In many ways he surpassed them all.

Over the past year, the Calum Maclean project based at the department of Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh. This ground-breaking resource is aimed not just at academics, but for everyone with an interest in the folklore and culture of the Scottish Highlands – not least the communities from whom Calum Maclean collected his treasures in the first place.

A selection of archival recordings – many of which are available on the Tobar an Dualchais / Kist o Riches website – made by Calum Maclean during the 1950s is scheduled to be released by Greentrax next year.

Barrachd Fiosrachaidh / For further information about the Calum Maclean Project:

Website: www.calum-maclean-project.celtscot.ed.ac.uk

Blog: calumimaclean.blogspot.co.uk

Facebook: facebook.com/calumiainmaclean

Twitter: twitter.com/CalumIMaclean

E-mail: calum-maclean@ed.ac.uk



SCHOOL OF SCOTTISH STUDIES / TASGLANN SGOIL EÒLAIS NA H-ALBA

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/celtic-scottish-studies/archives

Further information may be obtained from our office on 0131 6504167, from the Sound Archive on 0131 6504159, or from our website, www.celtscot.ed.ac.uk. The School of Scottish Studies Archives are located within Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, 27–29 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LD. Those wishing to consult the collections should contact the Archivist to make an appointment.

Faodar barrachd fiosrachaidh fhaotainn air ar fòn aig an oifis 0131 6504167, Tasglann Chlàr-Fuaim 0131 6504159, air neo ar làrach-lìn, www.celtscot.ed.ac.uk. Tha Tasglann Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba ann an Roinn na Ceiltis agus Eòlas na h-Alba aig Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann, 27–29, Ceàrnag Sheòrais, Dùn Èideann, EH8 9LD. Ma bhios sibh airson tadhal oirnn nach biodh sibh cho math agus fios a chur don Tasglannaiche an toiseach gus coinneamh a chur air dòigh.



TOBAR AN DULCHAIS / KIST O RICHES

www.tobarandualchais.co.uk

Tobar an Dualchais / Kist o Riches is a collaborative project based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig in the Isle of Skye which has been set up to preserve, digitise, catalogue and make available online over 12,000 hours of audio recordings from the archives of the School of Scottish Studies (University of Edinburgh), BBC Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland's Canna Collection. The project will ensure that Scotland's rich heritage of stories, music, songs and factual information will be safeguarded and made available to a world-wide audience.

Chaidh pròiseact Tobar an Dualchais, stèidhichte aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig san Eilean Sgitheanach, a chur air chois gus còrr is 12,000 uair a thìde de chlàran-fuaim bho Sgoil Eòlais na h-Alba (Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann), BBC Alba agus bho Chruinneachadh Chanaigh aig Urras Nàiseanta na h-Alba, a ghleidheadh ann an cruth didseatach, a chatalogadh, agus a sgaoileadh air-loidhne. Fo sgèith a' phròiseict, thèid dualchas beairteach na h-Alba – sgeulachan, ceòl, òrain is fiosrachadh – a dhìon agus fhoillseachadh do dhaoine sam bith aig a bheil ùidh ann air feadh an t-saoghail.



Tobar an Dualchais
Kist o Riches

www.tobarandualchais.co.uk
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