

# THE SCOTTISH STUDIES NEWS

Newsletter of the Centre for Scottish Studies at Simon Fraser University ୨୦୦୯ VOLUME 1, NUMBER 7 ୨୦୦୯ FALL 2009



## 2009-10 TALK SERIES SCOTTISH MUSIC & DANCE

After a successful season on 'Scotland Around the Globe' last year, the Centre will focus on Scottish music and dance for its 2009-10 series of talks. Inspiring presentations on Highland piping by BC Champions, Lowland piping by Dr. Gary West of *Pipeline* fame and Scottish country dancing by instructor Rosemary Coupe will be featured. Events are free. All are welcome. SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings. Reservations: [leith@sfu.ca](mailto:leith@sfu.ca) or 778.782.4833.

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8 GOING FOR THE GOLD: BC PIPERS IN SCOTLAND

A panel discussion featuring world-renowned pipers Alan Bevan, Graham Davidson, Jack Lee, Terry Lee and Angus Macpherson with Hal Senyk as moderator. 7:30-9 PM

See **MUSIC & DANCE** page 3.

## ST. ANDREWS AND CALEDONIAN SOCIETY LECTURE

# Piper, scholar, BBC host: *Pipeline's* Gary West



**WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 2, 8 PM**  
SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings  
Reception to follow. For reservations:  
[leith@sfu.ca](mailto:leith@sfu.ca) or 778 782 4833

Dr. Gary West, Head of the Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies (Edinburgh), will deliver this year's annual St. Andrews and Caledonian Society lecture. His talk, entitled *Pipers without Kilts: Survival and Revival in the Scottish Lowland Bagpipe Tradition*, will explore a little known aspect of Scottish piping. His website notes: "From Pitlochry, in Perthshire, Gary West learned his piping with the much acclaimed Vale of Atholl pipe band with whom he played for 18 years winning both the Scottish and European Championships. In the late 1980s, he began to play a prominent role in the folk music scene, joining Ceolbeg in 1988, and becoming a founder member of the Scottish 'supergroup' Clan Alba in 1991,

playing alongside such luminaries as Dick Gaughan and Brian McNeil. He is in regular demand as a recording session player, and has performed on over 20 CDs. His teaching and research interests include issues of local and national identity; the history of Scottish music, revivals and oral history."

Gary also presents BBC Radio Scotland's weekly specialist piping programme, *Pipeline* ([www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0079g6v](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0079g6v)). His first solo CD, *The Islay Ball* (Greentrax 2001), earned rave reviews. His most recent collaboration, *Hinterlands* (2009), with vocalist and harpist Wendy Stewart prompted the following comment from Fiona Ritchie of NPR's *Thistle and Shamrock*: "Subtle instrumentals, dreamy vocals. West & Stewart pipes/clarsach combo *Hinterlands* is lovely rich new sound for the 2 ancient instruments."

SFU

CENTRE FOR SCOTTISH STUDIES

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER : [www.sfu.ca/scottish](http://www.sfu.ca/scottish)  
Prefer to have it by mail? 778.782.4833 or [leith@sfu.ca](mailto:leith@sfu.ca)

APRIL 2009 : CELEBRATING THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE POET'S BIRTH

## Robert Burns in a Transatlantic Context

In April 2009, the Centre for Scottish Studies hosted the first ever conference on the impact of Robert Burns in the Americas. Seventeen prominent scholars from Canada, the US and the UK met in discussion. The event included music, poetry and our homegrown Gung Haggis Fat Choy. Performers and participants munched haggis wontons and joined hands for a dragon dance to the bagpipes.



Workshop topics were as follows:

- Burns' involvement in the eighteenth-century transatlantic exchange of ideas
- the publication and circulation of Burns' work in the Americas
- the impact of Burns in Canada, the United States, and Central and South America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- the cultural uses made of Burns today (Burns Clubs, Burns Suppers, Tartan Days, etcetera)
- the relationship between the culture of the Scottish diaspora and that of other diasporas.

The conference also included many events for the general public. On April 7, "A Musical Celebration of Burns in America" featured Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat performing Scottish songs in British Columbian contexts. Dr. Kirsteen McCue sang and discussed Serge Hovey's adaptations of Burns songs.

Audience members were then treated to a mini-version of that truly homegrown variety of Burns celebration: the Gung Haggis Fat Choy celebration, invented by Todd Wong at SFU 17 years ago. Dr. Jan Walls performed a version of a Chinese clapper poem, Todd Wong and Joe MacDonald presented their "Rap to the Haggis," and poets Robert Crawford and Steve Collis read from their work. The evening ended on a high note, with performers and audience members alike munching on haggis wontons and joining hands for the dragon dance to bagpipe music.

On April 8, Michael Russell, Scottish Minister for Culture, External Affairs and the Constitution visited the conference and delivered a public talk on "Connecting Scotland and the Diaspora." This was followed by a Community Research Forum with presentations by Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat on the

history of Burns Night in BC, by Todd Wong on the history of Gung Haggis Fat Choy and by Robert Barr on the history of the Burns Club. Ray Eagle also performed a song. Later that night, Dr. Robert Crawford delivered an entertaining talk on his new biography of Burns, *The Bard*.

The conference wound up on April 9 with a reception sponsored by SFU's Centre for Scottish Studies and Scotland Development International. A collection of essays based on papers given at the conference is forthcoming with Ashgate Press, co-edited by Sharon Alker, Leith Davis, and Holly Nelson.

#### FIND OUT MORE

[www.sfu.ca/personal/leith/TransatlanticBurns.htm](http://www.sfu.ca/personal/leith/TransatlanticBurns.htm)

#### PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

[www.flickr.com/photos/53803790@Noo/sets/72157616650852646/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/53803790@Noo/sets/72157616650852646/)



**MUSIC & DANCING****THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5  
GOLD MEDAL HIGHLAND  
BAGPIPE PIPING**

A presentation and demonstration by Alan Bevan, winner of the Northern Meeting Gold Medal at Inverness (2008) and aggregate winner of the Donald MacLeod Memorial Invitational Competition (2009). 7:30-9:30 PM

**THURSDAY FEBRUARY 4  
SCOTTISH TRADITIONS  
OF DANCE:  
TRANSMISSION  
AND REINVENTION**

Presentation and demonstration by Rosemary Coupe. 7:30-9:30 PM

**2008 NORTHERN MEETING PIPING COMPETITIONS****Worldwide Virtual Burns Celebration****EVENT PICTURES**

[www.members.shaw.ca/ifeir/Robert\\_Burns\\_250th\\_Anniversary%202.htm](http://www.members.shaw.ca/ifeir/Robert_Burns_250th_Anniversary%202.htm)



On January 25, 2009, the Centre for Scottish Studies organized a Virtual Burns Celebration in honour of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns. At 1 pm Pacific Standard Time, as Burns lovers in Vancouver gathered at the statue in Stanley Park, participants around the world sent greetings to each other via the internet. Participating locations included Vancouver, Victoria, Winnipeg, Toronto, Halifax, San Francisco, Austin, Ayr, Port Adelaide, Australia and many others. It was our 21st-century affirmation that “Man to man, the world o’er/ Shall brothers be for a’ that.” Here is a copy of the greeting that was sent on behalf of the Vancouver gathering.

Dear Burns enthusiasts around the world:

250 years ago today, Robert Burns was born to a poor family in Alloway, Scotland. Despite his difficult circumstances, he would go on to become the best-loved poet of the English-speaking world.

A few years after his death, a few of Burns’s friends gathered to honour his memory. By the time of the Burns Centenary year, 1859, celebrations stretched from Ayrshire to Australia, from Kilmarnock to Canada West, from Edinburgh to Dunedin, New Zealand. Burns gatherings for that Centenary year celebrated their common interest by sending messages from city to city by means of the era’s new technology, the telegraph. Today, we are replicating the sense of union across the globe by sending an electric “spark o’ Nature’s fire” around the world using our new technology, the internet.

In Vancouver, many of us are gathered around the statue of Burns in Stanley Park. It is a copy of the Lawson original in Ayr, and it looks quietly over the water to downtown Vancouver and beyond. Today, we send greetings to those of you, who, like us, remember Burns and uphold the ideals of humanity, respect for nature and good fellowship that he represented in his poetry and song. Long may Burns’s legacy continue to link us in friendship around the globe.

Sincerely,  
Leith Davis, Director  
Centre for Scottish Studies, SFU



**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT NEEDS YOUR HELP**

“Voices From the West” features interviews of Scots immigrants to BC. We have been converting them from tape to digital and are looking for people to help transcribe so that they can be used more effectively. Some interviewees have thick accents, so we need people who are familiar with such accents! If you would like to donate a few hours listening to and transcribing the words of Scottish immigrants, or if you know someone with an interesting story, get in touch: leith@sfu.ca or 778 782 4833. Details: <http://scottish.sfu.ca/research/projects/history/>



**SCOTTISH STUDIES GETS A NEW HOME**

In January 2010, the Centre will open a new office in the Department of English, AQ 6087. This will serve as our administrative centre and as a library that can be accessed by members of the university or by the general public. We would be happy to receive donations of books or other Scottish memorabilia for the office. For access to the library once it is set up, please contact Leith Davis at leith@sfu.ca or 778.782.4833.



**You can help the Centre for Scottish Studies**

The Centre for Scottish Studies was established in 1998. Since that time, it has been providing educational opportunities for students and community members wishing to learn more about Scottish history and culture and the Scottish diaspora as well as promoting research on Scottish studies, particularly in British Columbia.

Financial support has come from Simon Fraser University, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the St. Andrews and Caledonian Society, the British Consul General as well as numerous individual donors. We thank all our generous supporters.

**ANNUAL GIFTS**

Support the Centre’s programs and activities with an annual gift to help pay for programming including special lectures and events. Or support an annual scholarship with a minimum gift of \$1,000 a year for three years.

**ENDOWED GIFTS**

Consider creating a named endowment fund for the following:

- Scholarships & Bursaries (minimum \$20,000)
- Annual Lecture Series (minimum \$50,000)
- Visiting Professorship (\$500,000)
- Visiting Chair (\$1 million)
- Permanent Chair (\$2 million)

**PLANNED GIFTS**

Make a bequest in your will or designate the Centre for Scottish Studies as the beneficiary of an insurance policy. All the funds paid out in premiums can be receipted for tax purposes.

For more information on making a gift to the Centre for Scottish Studies please contact:

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