

Appalachian-Scottish Studies, East Tennessee State University

An exchange agreement between East Tennessee State University and Edinburgh University was signed in 1989, to encourage and promote comparative study on the similarities and differences between Scotland and the Appalachian region, through the exchange of cultural links between scholars and tradition bearers of the two regions. In 1989 and 1991, the School of Scottish Studies hosted students from Tennessee. In 1992, from 7-13 July, honours students Owen Hand, Alyne Jones and Jane George, together with lecturer Susan Storrier, representing the School of Scottish Studies, contributed to the course on Appalachian and Scottish Culture, which was co-ordinated by Dr Tom Burton, Professor of English at ETSU.

The programme assembled by Dr Burton encompassed the broad spectrum of Scottish and Appalachian culture, with a variety of lectures. Dr Michael Montgomery of the University of South Carolina discussed the languages and dialects of Scotland, showing how these may have influenced Appalachian speech patterns. Dr Edward Cowan from the University of Guelph, Ontario, explored the Scots, from the 'forging of a nation', through its people, religion and popular culture, to the 'myth of Scotch America', in a series of spirited and lively lectures. Susan Storrier contributed illustrated lectures, ranging from 'The Land and Early Peoples of Scotland' and 'Traditional Society and its material base in Modern Scotland', to 'Rural and Urban Vernacular Architecture'. Alyne Jones presented a beautifully illustrated lecture on 'Galloway—land of the people' and an informative study on Riccarton Junction—a railway village in the Scottish Borders.

Owen Hand traced the industrial history of Paisley and the famous 'Paisley Pattern', with examples of Paisley shawls, and he also held the audience spellbound with a lecture on 'The Seal Legends of Scotland'. Jane George's lectures on 'The Royal and Ancient Game of Golf' and 'The Roaring Game of Curling', highlighted the central place which these two traditional sports have played in the lives of Scots.

The Appalachian input was in the form of story-tellers, ballad singers and ballads. Barbara McDermitt, an American scholar and former PhD student at the School of Scottish Studies, discussed the similarities and differences between superstitions in traditional tales, told by story-tellers in Scotland and Appalachia. With such a strong narrative tradition in the Appalachian region, an 'unofficial' as well as an 'official' audience with Ray Hicks, one of the tradition bearers in the art of story-telling, proved to be among the highlights for the Scottish students. Tom Burton provided an academic and scholarly approach in his lecture on 'The Traditional Scots Ballads in Appalachia'. On a trip to Beech Mountain, North

Caroline, the three Scottish students also heard ballads 'in situ', sung by two tradition bearers, Hattie Presnell and her sister Rosie-Jane.

There were several outings to places of local interest. The Museum of Appalachia is a 'living' open-air museum relating to the pioneering lifestyle of the early settlers and the Scottish students found it to be a rich source of ethnological interest. A trip to Grandfather Mountain, North Carolina, for the Highland Games, proved an eye-opening and overwhelming experience. The ubiquitous tartan, worn in a multiplicity of forms on a variety of shapes and sizes, made the 'tartanless' Scottish students feel like displaced persons in the cast of 'Brigadoon'! It has to be said that although these games are unique and a spectacular affair, they are in stark contrast to the majority of the local community types of games with which we are more familiar in Scotland.

Wherever we went we were given generous hospitality and a warm welcome. On our last evening, a public concert was held at ETSU, with the musical talents of Owen Hand and Alyne given top billing. They were supported by local singers, musicians and story-tellers. This proved to be an apt ending to a successful exchange of cultures.

Having been given the opportunity, through the School of Scottish Studies and the financial assistance of ETSU, to go to Tennessee and be a part of the course and with the experience gained in lecturing as undergraduates, we feel this has been of great benefit, not only to us as students, but we hope also to the students at ETSU. The links which have been forged with ETSU will be continued in the future, through greater sponsorship by bodies interested in maintaining links in a shared heritage.

OWEN HAND, ALYNE JONES, JANE GEORGE