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A Festschrift for John Shaw

Edited By

Virginia Blankenhorn
Robert Dunbar
Tiber Falzett

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About the journal

First published in 1957, *Scottish Studies* has striven to reflect the mission of the University of Edinburgh's School of Scottish Studies, founded in 1951 to preserve and explore Scotland's rich and diverse cultural and linguistic heritage. Research topics have included archaeology and pre-history; demographics; ethnography and ethnology; history; land use and distribution; fishing and seafaring; material culture; onomastics; oral culture and traditions; and spiritual beliefs, customs and observances. Today, in addition to these topics, we welcome research centering on Scotland's evolving landscapes, physical and social, and the peoples who call Scotland home in the twenty-first century.

Publication

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Submissions

Scottish Studies encourages submissions of original research, in English or Gaelic, from affiliated and independent scholars worldwide. Prior to submitting, researchers should contact the editor directly to request the Author Guidelines. Following initial editorial scrutiny, articles are subject to double-blind peer review.

Reviews are normally commissioned, but we welcome readers' suggestions of works that they would like to see reviewed.

Please address all communication to the editor, Virginia Blankenhorn, at virginia.blankenhorn@ed.ac.uk, using the subject-line 'Scottish Studies'.

Editor

Virginia Blankenhorn

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Contributors

(Affiliations listed reflect current or most recent positions held.)

Ronald I. M. Black, Honorary Fellow, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Virginia Blankenhorn, Honorary Fellow, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Katharine Campbell, Honorary Research Fellow, The Elphinstone Institute, Aberdeen.

Hugh Cheape, Senior Lecturer, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, University of the Highlands and Islands.

Robert Dunbar, Professor of Celtic, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Tiber F. M. Falzett, Head of Folklore & Ethnology, School of Irish, Celtic Studies & Folklore,
University College Dublin

Maxim Fomin, Professor of Celtic Studies, Digital Humanities and Irish Folklore, University of
Ulster.

Terry Gunnell, Professor of Folkloristics, University of Iceland.

William Lamb, Professor of Gaelic Ethnology and Linguistics, Celtic and Scottish Studies,
University of Edinburgh.

Carl Lindahl, Professor of English, University of Houston.

Emily Lyle, Honorary Fellow, Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Séamus Mac Mathúna, Professor of Irish, University of Ulster.

Dòmhnall Eachann Meek, Professor of Gaelic, University of Edinburgh.

Séamas Ó Catháin, Director, National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

Lillis Ó Laoire, Professor of Irish, NUI Galway

Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, Professor of Gaelic (Celtic and Gaelic), University of Glasgow.

Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, Associate Research Professor, Folkloristics, Árni Magnússon Institute for
Icelandic Studies, University of Iceland.

Ríonach uí Ógáin, Director, National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin.

Seosamh Watson, Emeritus Professor of Modern Irish, University College Dublin.

Editor's Note

Readers familiar with the first seventeen volumes (1957–1973) of this journal will recall that, in its early days, *Scottish Studies* appeared semi-annually. Alas, we no longer have the staff or resources to publish twice a year. This year, however, is an exception.

In 2023, when I agreed to edit the journal, I learned that colleagues at the University of Edinburgh had long planned a Festschrift to honour John Shaw, retired Senior Lecturer in Ethnology in the School of Scottish Studies. As so often happens these days, however, the difficulty of identifying a suitable publisher willing to devote resources to a niche book had slowed progress on this worthy project. For the editors – Rob Dunbar, Professor of Celtic at the University of Edinburgh, and Tiber Falzett, who achieved his doctorate here under John Shaw's supervision, and who is now Head of Folklore & Ethnology at University College Dublin – *Scottish Studies* would have been an obvious choice; but as long as John Shaw was himself editing the journal, they could hardly ask the man to publish his own tribute, even if they had not wished to surprise him. With the change in editorship, however, publishing the Festschrift in *Scottish Studies* became possible, and I happily joined the editorial conspiracy.

As such volumes are wont to do, this one reflects the breadth and depth of the honoree's interests as well as those of the friends and colleagues who have contributed to it. The Gaelic language and its culture – folklore, storytelling, song, and community life – provide the focus for several articles. Cultural links between Scotland and elsewhere – Ireland, Iceland, Norway, and the Scottish diaspora in Canada and Appalachia – are explored in others. The work of folklore collecting and stewardship – activities at the heart of Shaw's own scholarly legacy – is touched upon in connection with the work of earlier collectors. Interestingly, some authors present different views of the same subject: Hugh Cheape and Rob Dunbar discuss the work of John Lorne Campbell in Scotland and Nova Scotia; Maxim Fomin and Séamus Mac Mathúna reveal aspects of sea lore in Scotland and Northern Ireland; and Tiber Falzett and Terry Gunnell explore the traditional association between musical inspiration and running water. Summary abstracts of all of these articles can be consulted at the back of the volume.

In any such undertaking as this, thanks are due. First, I must express my heartfelt appreciation to my co-editors who, recognising the importance of this project, identified and recruited potential participants, stayed in touch with them when progress seemed slow, and encouraged them to work with me as we entered the home stretch. This has truly been a team effort.

My thanks, too, to Dr Emily Lyle, Honorary Fellow of Edinburgh University, whose friendship, steadfast support and deep experience of getting things published has sustained me throughout this whole process.

Finally, my sincere gratitude to our contributors, not least for their patient willingness to put up with my editorial nit-picking and what one of them called my 'real world' deadlines as we inched toward the finish-line.

May these offerings stand as a lasting tribute to our friend and colleague John Shaw, to whom we express our warm congratulations on reaching his eighty-second birthday this month. May we all continue to enjoy his company for many years to come. *Gum bu fada beò e!*

VIRGINIA BLANKENHORN
Editor, *Scottish Studies*
March 2026

