

## 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!*

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