Diaspora and Encounter: The Focus of Scottish Studies at UVic

Scotland has long been an exporter of human capital. From the gallowglasses of the medieval era to the Orcadians working for the Hudson’s Bay Company, from the surgeons employed by the East India Company to schoolteachers in rural British Columbia, the men and women from one of Europe’s smaller and most “peripheral” nations have been flung across the globe and brought into contact with an astonishing variety of peoples and cultures. This long-term historical process, which gained considerable momentum after the Union of 1707, is the focus of new research and public engagement supported by the Scottish Studies Faculty Fellowship at the UVic.

Scottish Studies are supported at UVic through the Hugh Campbell and Marion Alice Small Fund for Scottish Studies. Established through a bequest in 2005 from the estate of Marion Small, a professor of art education at the University and former president of the local St. Andrew’s and Caledonian Society, the Fund provides for a faculty fellowship, a graduate scholarship, and the acquisition of relevant materials by the UVic libraries. As well, a gift from the former St. Andrew’s and Caledonian Society (1859-2014) provides an annual travel award for undergraduate students to study at a Scottish university.

The Hugh Campbell and Marion Alice Small Scottish Studies Fellow for 2017–20 is Dr. Peter Cook, an associate professor in the Department of History. A student of Indigenous-settler relations in eastern North America and of pre-Confederation Canada, Cook has begun to examine the histories of two neighbouring diasporic communities in what is now eastern Ontario: the predominantly Kanien’kehaka (Mohawk) community called Akwesasne and the predominantly Highland Scottish settlement near Cornwall, Ontario, known colloquially as “the Highland colony.” Both were founded in the last half of the eighteenth century in the midst of imperial conflicts that swept Indigenous and colonizing peoples from old homes to new ones. The original founders of Akwesasne and Glengarry were Catholic agrarianists; they spoke Mohawk or Gaelic rather than English. To the Anglo-Protestant elites who aimed to rule British North America, Highlanders and Kanien’kehaka alike were regularly categorized as “savage” peoples. Most histories of the region address either Indigenous or settler experiences, but not both; Cook’s study is based on the premise that the historical trajectories of the two communities can only be fully appreciated when examined in tandem.

To deepen the research on Scots in eastern Canada and to bolster the promotion of Scottish Studies in Victoria, Cook is collaborating with Dr. Katie McCullough, Director of the Centre for Scottish Studies at Simon Fraser University. The first fruit of this collaboration was the visit of a distinguished scholar of Scottish history to UVic and SFU in late October of this year. Dr. Andrew Mackillop from the University of Glasgow gave well-attended public talks in Victoria and Surrey on the role Scots played in India under the auspices of the East India Company and on the impact their activity had on Scottish society at home. Those in attendance learned that in the early nineteenth century, roughly 40% of the surgeons employed by the Company were Scottish, as were more than one in five army officers. The disproportionately high numbers of Scots across a broad range of middle and senior positions in the Company testified to the strength of the educational system in Scotland and to the existence of international networks through which Scottish manpower was channeled to overseas endeavours. A good deal of the wealth Scots acquired in the process (provided they survived their term of service, which was certainly not a given in places where tropical diseases heightened the mortality of sojourning Europeans) was funneled back to Scotland,
Upcoming Events: December & January

Vancouver Island Piper’s Club
Curtis LeBlanc (new P/M of Canadian Scottish)
& James P. Troy (Competition Soloist)

December 2*, 8:00 pm
* Note change of date
Venue is Sergeants Mess at the
Bay St Armoury, Victoria.
For parking enter from Field St
off Douglas, going north.
Admission is $10.00  Cash bar.

Celtic Tenors Christmas
December 5 &6 at 7:30 pm
Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney
Tickets $52.50
www.marywinspear.ca

Brentwood Scottish Country Dancers
Fun Fridays are held on every 2nd Friday of month.
These are all simple dances called.
Last one for 2017 is December 8
from 7:00-8:30 pm at
1229 Clarke Rd. in Brentwood.
Free first time and $3 drop in
fee thereafter.
janet.mitchell@shaw.ca

Van Isle Scottish Country Dance Society
Christmas Social
December 9, 7:30 pm—10:30 pm
City Light Church Hall
550 Obed Avenue
Admission $15.00; music by Mary Ross.
Most dances will be walked through.
Refreshments will be served.
Go to viscds.ca and click on Events for program.

Van Isle Scottish Country Dance Society:
New Year’s Hogmanay
Potluck Dinner and Dance
December 31, 2017
City Light Church Hall — 550 Obed Avenue
Doors Open 6:00 pm; Dinner 6:30 pm
Dance 8:00 pm
Dessert, tea, coffee 10:00 pm
Auld Lang Syne 11:00 pm
Please bring your own cutlery and dishes
plus, if needed – a spoon for your
potluck donation.
Dinner and dance: $12.00 plus potluck donation;
dinner or dance: $10.00
Program is on our website www.viscds.ca

Brentwood Scottish Country Dancers
January 8, 7 pm.  Details as for Dec. 8th.
Fun Fridays on 2nd Friday of each month.

Van Isle Scottish Country Dance Society
Burns Social
7:30—10:30 pm, January 20
City Light Church Hall
550 Obed Avenue
Admission is $15.00.
Most dances will be walked through. Music by Mary Ross.
Refreshments will be served.
Go to viscds.ca and click on Events for program.

Burns Dinner
Saturday, January 20, 2018
Sponsored by the Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association
Cocktails (no host bar) - 6:00 pm
Dinner - 6:30 pm. Cost $40.
Howard Johnson Hotel
4670 Elk Lake Drive
(near the Commonwealth Pool)
Dress – Highland or dressy
For tickets/information contact Irene at
kifeir@shaw.ca or 250 652-5773

Burns Memorial
1:45 pm Sunday, January 21, 2018
Ceremony with Burns readings and piper
at the Burns Statue in Beacon Hill Park
(located across from the Petting Zoo).
Organised by Saltire Society of Victoria.

Robert Burns Tea and Concert
St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Kirk Hall
680 Courtney St, Victoria
2:30 pm on Sunday, January 21, 2018
Highland & Scottish Country Dancing, Victoria Gaelic
Choir, Burns Poetry
Start time flexible as we give people
at the Burns Memorial time to get to
the Kirk Hall. There is a parkade on
Courtney St.
Admission by donation.
Concert is followed by
tea social.
For more information
contact Lianne Hunter at
lhunter@islandnet.com
or 250 385-8744.
15th Annual Robbie Burns Dinner
Sponsored by Greater Victoria Police Pipe Band
Saturday, January 27, 2018
5:00 pm - 10:30 pm

Mary Winspear Community Cultural Centre
2243 Beacon Ave. W, Sidney.
Tickets are $55. Cash bar.
For tickets, please email Charlie Bates cmb1@shaw.ca or Jim Maxwell jmaxwell@shaw.ca
Please include your phone number in your email.
http://gvppb.com/burns-night/

Brentwood Scottish Country Dancers
2:00 pm on Sunday, January 28, 2018
Social Tea @ Brentwood Centre

The group will be dancing at the monthly tea held at The Centre, 1229 Clarke Road
one block north of the light at Wallace and West Saanich Road. There is opportunity
for audience members to join into participation dances. **Cost for the tea is $5** which
includes sandwiches and goodies.

Celtic Arts Foundation
Winter School 2018
February 4, 2018 - March 14, 2018
Seabeck Conference Center, Seabeck, WA
2-day and 5-day courses:
Highland Pipes, Smallpipes & Fiddles, Drumming
www.celticarts.org/celtic-events/ws18-1/

Diaspora and Encounter: Cont’d from p. 1
where it might be employed in such self-consciously “traditional” endeavours as building a castle or landscaping an estate.

Many of the landmarks we think of today as expressions of quintessential Scottishness were made possible by inflows of wealth from Asia. Stay tuned in the near future for talks by experts on the Scottish diaspora both from Scotland and Canada at the University of Victoria.

Cook and McCullough are also planning to collaborate in undergraduate teaching at UVic and SF through course creation, guest lectures, and the promotion of student work. Both professors are offering a course on Scots in the Atlantic World in January 2019. This institutional collaboration across the Salish Sea aims to sustain the momentum of research and teaching on the Scottish diaspora in the Pacific Northwest.

The Scottish community in Victoria has long been a strong supporter of Scottish Studies at UVic. If people wish to donate they can give to the fund, which is endowed: please contact Chrystal Phan, Development Officer, Faculty of Humanities, at (250) 853-3893 or hums.libr.devt@uvic.ca.

**Article contributed by Dr. Peter Cook, Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Victoria.**

Members of Saltire Society—St. Andrew’s Dinner 2017

Saltire Members and guests at St. Andrew’s Dinner held at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club—November 24, 2017
The History of Hogmanay
By Ben Johnson (reprinted from www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofScotland/The-History-of-Hogmanay)

Only one nation in the world can celebrate the New Year or Hogmanay with such revelry and passion—the Scots! But what are the actual origins of Hogmanay, and why should a tall dark stranger be a welcome visitor after midnight?

It is believed that many of the traditional Hogmanay celebrations were originally brought to Scotland by the invading Vikings in the early 8th and 9th centuries. These Norsemen, or men from an even more northerly latitude than Scotland, paid particular attention to the arrival of the Winter Solstice or the shortest day, and fully intended to celebrate its passing with some serious partying.

In Shetland, where the Viking influence remains strongest, New Year is still called Yules, deriving from the Scandinavian word for the midwinter festival of Yule. It may surprise many people to note that Christmas was not celebrated as a festival and virtually banned in Scotland for around 400 years, from the end of the 17th century to the 1950s. The reason for this dates back to the years of Protestant Reformation, when the straight laced Kirk proclaimed Christmas as a Popish or Catholic feast, and as such needed banning.

And so it was, right up until the 1950s that many Scots worked over Christmas and celebrated their winter solstice holiday at New Year when family and friends would gather for a party and to exchange presents which came to be known as hogmanays.

There are several traditions and superstitions that should be taken care of before midnight on the 31st December: these include cleaning the house and taking out the ashes from the fire, there is also the requirement to clear all your debts before “the bells” sound midnight, the underlying message being to clear out the remains of the old year, have a clean break and welcome in a young, New Year on a happy note.

Immediately after midnight it is traditional to sing Robert Burns’ “Auld Lang Syne”. Burns published his version of this popular little ditty in 1788, although the tune was in print over 80 years before this.

”Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind? Should auld acquaintance be forgot and auld lang syne For auld lang syne, my dear, for auld lang syne. We’ll take a cup o kindness yet, for auld lang syne.”

An integral part of the Hogmanay party, which is continued with equal enthusiasm today, is to welcome friends and strangers with warm hospitality and of course lots of enforced kissing for all.

“First footing” (or the “first foot” in the house after midnight) is still common across Scotland. To ensure good luck for the house the first foot should be a dark male, and he should bring with him symbolic pieces of coal, shortbread, salt, black bun and a wee dram of whisky. The dark male bit is believed to be a throwback to the Viking days, when a big blonde stranger arriving on your door step with a big axe meant big trouble, and probably not a very happy New Year!

The firework displays and torchlight processions now enjoyed throughout many cities in Scotland are reminders of the ancient pagan parties from those Viking days of long ago.

The traditional New Year ceremony would involve people dressing up in the hides of cattle and running around the village whilst being hit by sticks. The festivities would also include the lighting of bonfires and tossing torches. Animal hide wrapped around sticks and ignited produced a smoke that was believed to be very effective in warding off evil spirits: this smoking stick was also known as a Hogmanay.

Many of these customs continue today, especially in the older communities of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. On the Isle of Lewis, in the Outer Hebrides, the young men and boys form themselves into opposing bands; the leader of each wears a sheep skin, while another member carries a sack. The bands move through the village from house to house reciting a Gaelic rhyme. The boys are given bannocks (fruit buns) for their sack before moving on to the next house.

One of the most spectacular fire ceremonies takes place in Stonehaven, south of Aberdeen on the northern east coast. Giant fireballs are swung around on long metal poles each requiring many men to carry them as they are paraded up and down the High Street. Again the origin is believed to be linked to the Winter Solstice with the swinging fireballs signifying the power of the sun, purifying the world by consuming evil spirits.

For visitors to Scotland it is worth remembering that January 2nd is also a national holiday in Scotland, this extra day being barely enough time to recover from a week of intense revelry and merry-making. All of which helps to form part of Scotland’s cultural legacy of ancient customs and traditions that surround the pagan festival of Hogmanay.

Stonehaven Fireballs
Photo: Pinterest
Scottish Culture:

**Saltire Society of Victoria:** Contact is the Provost, Irwin Henderson 250 382-1779 or the society’s Scriven-ner, Gordon Robinson 250-477-8317.

**Sons of Scotland Benevolent Association:** Contact is Keith Feir. Contact 250 652-5773 or feir@shaw.ca

**Victoria Gaelic Choir:** The group sings in both Gael-ic and English. Website: victoriagaelicchoir.com

**Victoria Highland Games Association:** President is Jim Maxwell. Many volunteer opportunities exist. For info see victoriahighlandgames.com

**The Celtic Connection:** Burnaby based tabloid publishing since 1991. Website: celtic-connection.com

Websites About Scotland:

The Scottish Banner is pleased to now offer a digital download subscription service. You can receive 3 free editions at www.scottishbanner.com/sb40. Enter the coupon code: Banner40 to trial this service.

Scottish Review is edited by journalist Kenneth Roy, giving a weekly sampling of current news stories in Scotland. You can sign up for free by going to: www.scottishreview.net

Rampant Scotland is a site begun in 1996 and written by Alan Scott, a Glasgow-area resident. Visit his eclectic site at www.RampantScotland.com/letter.htm

Dance Instruction:

**Brentwood Scottish Country Dancers:** Contact janet.mitchell@shaw.ca for more detailed information. Classes happen at Brentwood Centre.

**Vancouver Island Scottish Country Dance Society:** Visit www.viscds.ca for weekly classes for various levels of ability. Further information may be had from Dora Dempster, dora.dempster@shaw.ca

**Bon Accord Highland Dancers:** Lynne Griffiths. Tel. 250 479-7804 BonAccordDancers@shaw.ca

**Glengarry Highland Dancers:** Carolyn Phillips-Cusson. Tel. 250 758-0208 or email for information to info@celticperformingarts.com

**Kathleen Laurie School of Highland Dance:** Tel. 250 213-9627 dancehighland@gmail.com

**Katie Dean School of Highland Dance:** H 250-920-3513 cell 250-514-8110. kdean@shaw.ca

**O’Brien School of Irish Dancing:** Mairead O’Brien/Crystal vanBoven. Tel. 604 340-2370. Contact Alison Paladini. Tel. 250 888-9421 or email alisonpaladini@shaw.ca

**Victoria School of Irish Dance:** Tel. 604 942-8536 info@celticperformingarts.com

**Out of Ireland Irish Importers:** Tel. 250 382-9421 or email outofireland@shaw.ca

Victoria Area Pipe Bands:

**BC Pipe Band** serves solo Highland Bagpipers, Scottish Drummers and Pipe Bands in British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon. Website: bcpipers.org

**Castle Cary Pipes and Drums.** Website: castlecarypipesanddrums.ca

**443 Squadron RCAF Pipe Band.** Contact Pope Major Stephen Kelly. Website: 443squadron.ca or stevekelly@live.ca


**Pipe Band of the Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary’s).** Drum Major Glen Ercut, contact at Glen.Ercut@forces.gc.ca

**Saanich Peninsula Pipe Band.** Website: www.saanichpeninsulapipeband.blogspot.ca

**78th Fraser Highlanders Pipe Band.** Website: 78fraservictoria.ca. Pipe Major Steve Kelly Sr.

**2136 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps Pipes and Drums.** Website: www.2136cadets.ca

**VanIsle Caledonia Pipe Band.** Pipe Major Cole Griffiths. Tel. 250 857-5260. Website: www.vanislacaledonia.com

Local Businesses With Celtic Flavour:

**Bard and Banker Scottish Pub,** 1022 Government St, Victoria. Website: www.bardandbanker.com

**Caledonia Meats.** Haggis makers. Email: colegriffiths11@gmail.com or 250 857-5260.

**Fraser Orr’s Butcher and Deli,** 108-1931 Mt Newton Cross Rd., Saanichton. Haggis, Scotch pies, etc. Website: www.fraserorrskitchen.com

**Freedom Kilts,** 1919 Fernwood Rd, Victoria. Website: www.freedomkilts.com

**Irish Linen Stores,** 1019 Government St., Victoria. Website: www.irishlinenvictoria.com

**Irish Times Pub,** 1200 Government St, Victoria. Website: www.irishtimespub.ca


**Lion Rampant Scottish Pub,** 7788 Beaumont Ave., Duncan. Website: www.lionrampant.ca

**North of Hadrian’s Kilts and Celtic Clothing,** 264 Island Highway, Victoria. Website: www.northofhadrians.com

**Out of Ireland Irish Importers,** 1000 Government St., Victoria. Website: www.outofireland.ca

If you would like to be on the email mailing list for the *Scottish Newsletter*, please advise Larry Scott by email at kitimatlarry@gmail.com. Your email address will not be shared. Distribution is by email only and is free of charge. Businesses are listed as a community service.