



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

Issued: Tuesday, 28 November 2017

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### **PHOTO CALL**

**10AM, WEDNESDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2017  
29 GEORGE SQUARE  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, EH8 9LJ**

### **Gems from Scottish Studies archives aired for St Andrews Day**

A treasure trove of evocative recordings, striking images and rarely seen historic documents are among the highlights of a newly refurbished centre showcasing Scotland's culture.

Attractions in the University of Edinburgh centre include collections which detail, interpret and research aspects of Scottish life and the traditional arts.

These include place names, Gaelic and Scots songs and photographs depicting people, places, crafts and customs.

Visitors to the Centre in George Square will be able to explore the results of fieldwork undertaken by University staff and students over the past 60 years.

The School of Scottish Studies Archives are housed in the centre providing greater access for students, researchers and the public.

The archives feature thousands of hours of recordings of songs, music, stories, rhyme and verse, such as a traditional waulking song –sung in Gaelic by women while preparing cloth.

The languages of Scotland – Scots, Gaelic and English – are all represented in the archive as well as many dialects that are now extinct.

Material comes from communities throughout Scotland, including the Maclagan manuscripts, collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to preserve folk tales from rural areas.

It also features more than 120 recordings of songs by Stanley Robertson, a storyteller, singer and piper from a well-known Traveller family in the North East of Scotland.

Material from other countries is also represented, including the John Levy Collection, an archive of traditional music from Asia and beyond.

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Rachel Hosker, Archives Manager, Library and University Collections said: “The University is immensely proud of the School of Scottish Studies Archives. The development of this dynamic and accessible resource supports the ongoing collection, preservation and dissemination of sound recordings, visual images and written documents relating to the cultural traditions in Scotland, past, present and future. We are delighted to make this important collection more widely accessible to communities in Scotland, from academics, to schools, artists, local groups and beyond.”

Professor Gary West, Personal Chair in Scottish Ethnology, Director of the European Ethnological Research Centre, said: “The archive provides a unique insight into the riches of Scotland's cultures and traditions, and serves as a magnificent legacy of those past generations at this University who had the skill and foresight to collect them. As a living, growing collection, constantly being added to by staff and students alike, the archive not only fuels much of our own teaching and research, but serves communities from well beyond the university - locally, nationally and indeed across the globe.”

A series of events, including open days for specific interest and community groups, is taking place over the next few months to celebrate the collections.

Opening hours of the School of Scottish Studies Archives are 10am to 4pm, Tuesday to Friday.

For further information go to: <http://edin.ac/2hfdwPh>

To hear students, past and present, reflect on what the Scottish Studies Archives mean to them go to: <http://edin.ac/2jsXxhb>

For further information, please contact:

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