
Review of Scottish Culture 29

2024

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Editorial

Dr Valentina Bold FSA Scot, University of Edinburgh

Welcome to the 2024 annual volume of *Review of Scottish Culture* (ROSC), hosted by the European Ethnological Centre at the University of Edinburgh and published by Edinburgh University Press. We are particularly pleased to be returning, after a hiatus of several years, with a fresh online layout. I am delighted to fulfil the role of journal editor, supported by a distinguished and enthusiastic editorial board of experts, from across Scotland and internationally. We have made every effort to maintain the standards of excellence set by previous volumes of ROSC in print.

This is the 40th year of ROSC, founded in 1984 to explore and showcase Scotland's rich cultural heritage, in all its diversity and range. The focus is Scottish ethnology (folklore and folklife), both nationally and internationally. The journal encourages multi and interdisciplinary research on the ethnology of Scotland and Scottish culture globally, its tangible and intangible heritage. These key areas are our continued focus in our new digital form.

Moving forwards, we would like to take advantage of the opportunities that online presentation offers, including sound and video files and stills images alongside text-based content. We want to be at the forefront

of the discipline as it develops: creative and innovative as well as respectful to those who went before us to make this field dynamic, useful and exciting; co-workers in the field, contributing in both traditional and innovative ways – often mutually compatible and enriching.

In this 2024 issue, then, we are delighted to present a wide range of essays, engaging with Scottish culture from the present day back to the eighteenth century. A powerful team of distinguished, and emerging, writers are featured, from Scotland and from Europe. We are grateful to them and to all the people whose culture is presented, and represented, here.

There is a broadly narrative theme to the volume – a nod to Scotland's Year of Stories in 2022. Tangible culture is very well represented too. Some subjects will be familiar – Stephen Miller's exploration, for instance, of a well known Scottish folklorist, and his circle, from a new perspective. Hugh Cheape's study of a Hebridean plough type honours the original intentions of ROSC, demonstrating how the material reflects the communities who create it. Similar comments could be made about the detailed observations made by Piers Dixon and Joyce Durham, grounded in archaeology whilst fully cognisant of

living traditions and cultures. By looking at farm diaries, Dorothy McGuire presents important insights into everyday agricultural life in all its dimensions, with a great deal of specificity. This makes an interesting juxtaposition with Alistair Mutch's detailed piece on an Aberdeenshire laird's house. Many pieces are illustrated, facilitating readers' engagement with complex topics.

James Porter's essay on the Waterson manuscripts, and their family as well as historical significance, sits well alongside Katherine Campbell and Emily Lyall's work on Robert Cleghorn in context – including an opportunity to hear an example in the accompanying sound file. Murray Cook moves into the area of popular literature and archaeology through the work of Walter Scott; Jennifer Barnes shares important insights into performance and popular culture, through William McGonagall and Dundee. Abraham Kovacs examines folk religion and humour in the work of Ferenc Baráth and Ieuan Rees uses the starting point of a Bannockburn clock to show how material culture can contain a wealth of hidden personal and social information. A similar viewpoint informs Simon Gall's essay, taking the starting point of a soft toy to show how an oil family communicates and connects.

In short, I am confident that there is

something here for anyone interested in the culture and traditions of Scotland and, I hope, encouragement for future submissions. We are keen to broaden our reach, whilst maintaining the depth of scholarship that ROSC is known for. Understanding the culture of Scotland – both as it is expressed today in this diverse climate and as it connects to the past and future – is our goal and your contribution is welcomed. Theory and methodology, material culture, the culture of making, performance, narratology, music, song, food culture, customs and belief, visual and audio culture including social media, exhibition and interpretation and tourism: all of these are topics I would like to see represented in future issues. We are open now for submissions for the 2025 issue; proposals of 350 words should be sent to myself, valentina.bold@ed.ac.uk, preferably by the 30th of July 2024. Thank you for choosing to read this *Review of Scottish Culture*. I feel sure you will find it worthwhile and, I hope, as enjoyable as I have.