

Guest Singers:

LEN GRAHAM: County Antrim born, Len's extensive repertoire of songs covers the whole gamut of themes and human experience as portrayed in early classic ballads, broadside ballads, local songs, come-all-ye's, lyric folksongs and music hall pieces. His passion for the songs of his native Ulster led him to seek out and record older singers such as Eddie Butcher and Joe Holmes. After winning the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann traditional singing competition in 1971 his reputation began to spread. In 1992 he received the Seán O'Boyle Cultural Traditions Award in recognition of his work as a song collector and singer, and in 2002 he was honoured as the first recipient of the Irish television National Music Award for Traditional Singer Of the Year.

EMILY PORTMAN: With a BBC Folk Award nomination for her work with harmony trio The Devil's Interval, Emily is already an established musician on the UK folk scene, commended by Shirley Collins and annually touring with Waterson:Carthy. Emily originally hails from Glastonbury, where, raised on a diet of fairytales and Somerset folklore, she began songwriting at the age of six, starting out with a keyboard, a tape recorder and a thirst for blood-curdling stories. Emily has recently appeared at The Southbank Centre as part of their Folk Roots, New Routes series and at The Sage Gateshead and has won high praise on Radio 2 and at the Free Thinking Festival on Radio 3.

JOCK DUNCAN was brought up in the ballad-rich farming country around New Deer and Fyvie in Aberdeenshire. The great northeast singer John Strachan farmed close to Jock's family farm and for several years Jock sang with John Strachan's concert party. Jock knew old Jimmy McBeath and remembers giving Jimmy a sixpence for his rendition of an old bothy ballad at the cinema queue. Few singers nowadays can have such a pedigree. He is an Honorary Member of the TMSA and, in 2006, he was inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame in recognition of his contribution to Scotland's living song tradition.

JOHN VALENTINE is from Cove Bay near Aberdeen is an engineer in the oil industry. He first gained his enthusiasm for bothy ballads from his grandad who had quite a collection of recordings of Willie Kemp and Harry Gordon. His parents stayed in the bothy at Newton of Altens at Nigg and moved to Cove a year after John was born. As a ten years old he remembers singing *The Nicky Tams* standing on a table at his granie's ruby wedding. Geordie Murison is a friend of the family and, when the TMSA Tuesday sessions started in Aberdeen, he suggested John came along. There he met Tam Reid and Jim Taylor and soon he was taking part in the competitions at Keith and Turrieff - and in 2010 was invited to compete at the Elgin Champion of Champions Bothy Ballad Competition.

DUNCAN MACRAE is the most local of our guests - blacksmith since 1974 at Coaltown of Balgonie. Born in a cottage at the top of Glen Maick above Comrie where his father was shepherd, the family later moved to Rossie Ochil farm between Glenfarg and Forgandenny. There he remembers being encouraged to sing the bothy ballads by one of the horsemen - and, at the age of eight, riding on the tattie waggon singing *Bonnie Wee*

Jeannie McColl with the women walking behind, planting potatoes from their aprons. When he came to Coaltown he found himself in demand to sing at local events, but after Sheena Wellington suggested he try his hand at the TMSA festivals he soon gained the Traditional Singing Cup at Kirriemuir, Auchtermuchty and Keith as well as the Buchan Heritage festival at Strichen.

ELIZABETH STEWART is recognised as one of Scotland's finest traditional singers. Brought up in a traveller family Elizabeth has been singing the old songs and ballads since childhood. Many of her songs came from her family, the Fetterangus Stewarts - in particular from her aunt Lucy Stewart who became widely recognised after the release of recordings of her singing made in 1960 by the American collector Kenneth Goldstein. Elizabeth has also played piano in her own Scottish dance band - as did her mother - and her talent as a musician has no doubt influenced her style and her creativity in the interpretation of the songs she sings..

DANNY COUPER has been involved in the folk revival since the early days of the Aberdeen Folk Club when the great old timers such as Jeannie Robertson, Auld Davie Stewart (the Galoot) and Jimmy McBeath were as likely to be in the Folk Club as Martin Carthy, Cyril Tawney or Hamish Imlach. Danny was at the FifeSing Festival in 2010 - and is included on the CD recorded during that weekend - singing a great version of *McPherson's Lament* - learned from the singing of Auld Davie. Danny went into the fish trade in his twenties and over the years has built up one of the largest fish wholesale businesses in Scotland.

BRIAN DAWSON is widely known and respected, both as a performer and collector of folk material (especially from his home county of Lincolnshire). In his time Brian, as an accomplished musician (accordion and fiddle), has been a member of folk bands such as The Meggies (founders of Grimsby Folk Club back in the 1960s), and Broadside Ceilidh Band, which only recently disbanded. But he also quickly established himself as an equally accomplished solo performer. He has been a regular at the great Whitby Folk Week and has presented workshops on songs of Lincolnshire, and the singers and folk song collectors including the work of Australian musicologist and composer Percy Grainger.

Guest Lecture:

DR EMILY LYLE is an Honorary Fellow of the University of Edinburgh and was for many years a member of the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh. She has pioneered advances in the broad history of oral culture. She has studied Scottish song collectors of the past and has edited several collections including the important Greig-Duncan Folk Song Collection. In *Fairies and Folk: Approaches to the Scottish Ballad Tradition* (2007) she discusses fairy ballads like *Thomas the Rhymer* and *Tam Lin* in the context of traditional beliefs and Scottish culture from the Middle Ages up to the present day. Dr Lyle has recently published a paper on the Robin Hood ballads and we are honoured that she has agreed to present this as an Illustrated Lecture on Saturday morning.

The Programme:

Friday 13th May

Evening Concert: 8.00pm - 10.30pm

The opening concert with songs and ballads from the guest singers and participants - continuing as:

Singaround: 10.30pm - 12.30am

An opportunity for all to join in a singaround with songs from their own repertoire.

Saturday 14th May

Workshop/Talk: 10.00am - 11.00am

BRIAN DAWSON: *Folksongs and ballads from Lincolnshire and the Percy Grainger connection.*

Illustrated Lecture: 11.30am - 12.30pm

DR EMILY LYLE: *New Light on Early Robin Hood Ballads.*

Ballad Concert: 2.00pm - 5.00pm

The guests and participants with traditional ballads from their repertoire. The classic big ballads - the muckle songs.

Evening Concert: 7.30pm - 10.30pm

Songs from near and far: Guest singers present their song and ballad traditions.

Singaround: 10.30pm - 12.30am

Another chance for all to join in a singaround with songs from their own repertoire.

Sunday 15th May

Talk & Sing: 10.30am - 11.30am

EMILY PORTMAN: *My route into folk song.*

Reminiscences: 11.45am - 12.45pm

LEN GRAHAM: *The singers I have known and the songs I have inherited.*

Farewell Concert: 2.00pm - 5.00pm

The guest singers lead a farewell concert and singaround with songs from all who still have a good song to sing and a voice left to sing it!

With thanks:

We wish to give enormous thanks to all the singers who have given free use of their recordings to the East of Scotland Traditional Song Group. Profit made from the sale of these CDs goes towards the Fife Traditional Singing Festival and events organised by the Group.

The Place:

The Fife Animal Park

The **Fife Animal Park** is on the B937 between Collesie and Ladybank on the left about half a mile south from the A91/B937 crossroads. There are good train services from Dundee or Edinburgh to Ladybank station. Taxi from Ladybank *tel:* 01337 858722 or 857485 or 830256.

Restaurant: Food and Bar Facilities

Food will be available throughout the weekend between events - from Friday at 6.00pm and for Breakfast and Lunch (Saturday & Sunday) and Evening meal (Saturday). Full bar facilities at all events.

On-site Accommodation

The **Fife Animal Park** has a paddock for caravans and free camping with on-site toilet facilities. Let us know at the time of booking if you plan to bring a caravan.

Hotel and B&B Accommodation

Freuchie: Lomond Hills Hotel *tel:* 01337 857329
Ochil Villa B&B *tel:* 01337 858031 **Falkland:** Ladywell House B&B *tel:* 01337 858414 **Newton of Falkland:** Kiln House B&B *tel:* 01337 857188 **Auchtermuchty:** Redwood Cottage *tel:* 01337 828272 **Gateside:** Edenshead Stables *tel:* 01337 868500 **Newburgh:** Ninewells Farmhouse *tel:* 01337 840307

For more B&Bs see website link below.

Organised & Hosted by:

The East of Scotland Traditional Song Group was formed in 2003 by Peter Shephard, Tom Spiers and Arthur Watson as a vehicle for running the Fife Traditional Singing Weekend. They also sing together as *Shephard, Spiers & Watson*. The Group has now been formed into a Trust with the addition of two new trustees - Jimmy Hutchison from Newburgh and Chris Miles from Kirkcaldy.

Website News:

There will be regular updates of programme changes given on the FifeSing website:

www.springthyme.co.uk/fifefsing

Look up the FifeSing website for fuller biographies on the guest singers and for links to their own websites and for Google map of routes to the Fife Animal Park.