



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **After a Century, Scottish Cultural Treasure Returning to the Firth**

Portobello, June 2012

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, an international collaboration will restore to the Firth of Forth the ancient 'dreg songs', unique traditions of the local oyster fishery. From 7:30 PM, just off Portobello Promenade near the Dalriada Bar Boatie Blest, Rowporty and Newhaven Coastal Rowing, three Scottish Coastal Rowing clubs, will offer their interpretations of these rowing songs both in their boats (weather permitting) and in the pub. Using recently discovered wax cylinder recordings and typed texts from the 1920s and 30s the clubs will recreate these songs assisted by American folklorist Bob Walser. Wednesday evening will be the first singing of these songs on their home waters in a century!

To add to this festive occasion, the Museums Department from the City Art Centre will be bringing traditional fishwives costumes from Newhaven and a display of photographs related to fishing in the Firth of Forth. In addition, a special 'Dreg Songs Ale' has been brewed by Inveralmond Brewery and will be available on the night. Of course, a celebration of oyster fishing songs requires oysters and Michael Pollington of Pollington's Fine Food and Drink has arranged with a local fishmonger to have fine Scottish oysters to enjoy.

This will be a truly historic occasion. Recognizing this, both Edinburgh Napier University and Celtic and Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh will be sending students to document the evening, interview participants and create an archival record of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

The event is being created with the help of the James Madison Carpenter Collection Project, Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen and the Library of Congress (USA) which holds the wax cylinders where these songs were discovered. In addition to all the participants, thanks are due to the National Endowment for the Humanities (USA), the American Folklore Society and The British Academy for supporting the research that will enable these communities to celebrate their traditions in this unique way.

Come enjoy an evening by the Firth celebrating these unique and fascinating Scottish song traditions!

For further information, contact Bob Walser, [dregsongs@bobwalser.com](mailto:dregsongs@bobwalser.com).

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If you'd like more information about the project, contact Bob Walser on 001-612-598-6842 (in the USA, 6 hours earlier than Portobello, please call after 1PM Scotland time).