

NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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Canna House Archives hosts symposium on connections to St Columba

- **Event first of its type on the island**
- **Symposium to be held on St Columba's day, 80 years after historic purchase**
- **Papers invited to be submitted by 9 April**

Thought to have been inhabited since 5000BC, the small island of Canna off the south-west of Skye will be the location of a one-day symposium entitled 'The Columba Connection' on 9 June this year. Organised by the National Trust for Scotland's Canna House Archives, the event will feature a programme of academic papers, guided walks and musical events, to be delivered in the appropriately named St Columba's Chapel, the island's "Shearing Shed" community space and in Canna House garden.

Canna was bought in 1938 by Gaelic scholar John Lorne Campbell and his wife Margaret Fay Shaw and donated to the National Trust for Scotland in 1981. Over the course of their lives, as well as farming the island, they amassed what is today, one of the world's most important collections of Gaelic and Celtic Folklore, song, story and image archives.

The Columba Connection/Ceangal Choluim-Chille/Cónasc Cholm Cille symposium will take place on St Columba's day itself (9 June). It also marks 80 years since the Campbell's purchase of Canna which the couple hoped would help re-establish a traditional Gaelic speaking Hebridean community, based around the Church, farm and school.

John Lorne firmly believed that Canna was once the "summer home" of St Columba and was the noted "Hinba" referred to in Columba's papers. The archaeology points towards a monastic presence on the island at the time of St Columba.

The Chair of Celtic at Edinburgh University, Professor Rob Dunbar, will deliver a keynote speech on the historical links between Columba, Canna and the Campbells and Brian McGee, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, will be in attendance at the event to give a blessing at the Celtic cross.

National Trust for Scotland archaeologist Derek Alexander will deliver the archaeological evidence for Columba's presence on the island, the Canna Rangers will conduct guided walks around the island and Canna Archivist Fiona J Mackenzie will perform some of the songs collected by the Campbells.

Proposals to deliver an afternoon paper are invited from interested parties by 9 April on the theme Bho Eirinn gu Alb'ar lochran 's ar n-earbs' (From Eire to Alba, our torch and our guide), a line from the popular Laoidh Choluim Chille St Columba's Hymn.

More information on the symposium - and proposals for papers - is available from Canna Archivist Fiona J Mackenzie on fmackenzie@nts.org.uk or 01687462473.

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Images: Hi-res images of Canna and the Campbells can be downloaded from <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/3K6k80>

