

The Centre was set up as a result of co-operation between Edinburgh University and the Foundation for Canadian Studies in the United Kingdom. The Foundation provided the original endowment for the Centre's Lectureship, and it contributes an annual grant which meets about three-quarters of other salary costs.

The Centre's founder, the geographer Wreford Watson, was a poet of some note, having won the Governor-General's medal for verse published as James Wreford.

Multidisciplinary courses on Canada

Today, the Centre offers two multidisciplinary courses on Canada, *Canadian Studies 1* and *Canadian Studies 2*, as well as specialist courses in the disciplines – history and geography – of the two full-time staff members.

Canadian Studies 1 is particularly popular, in part because it is taken as an 'outside' course or 'elective'. A combination of detailed organisation – students are issued with a 20-page course outline – and a spirit of informality in teaching helps to produce lively and enjoyable tutorial discussions.

The mix seems to work. Enrolments have steadily risen and the Centre's student-to-staff ratio is the highest in the Social Sciences Faculty. Projecting average levels of enrolments, the Edinburgh Centre is teaching about 1,000 students each decade.

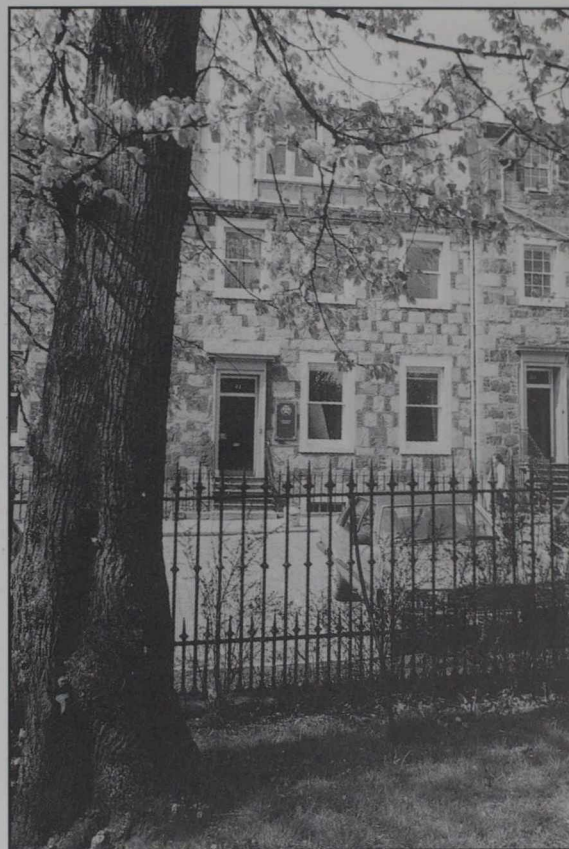
In addition, the Edinburgh Centre is a focus for research on Canada. Its Committee consists of 36 academics with research and teaching interests in Canadian Studies (a directory of their interests will be published in the near future). Edinburgh graduates are encouraged to visit Canada for further study – for instance through the Memorial-Edinburgh Studentship, provided each year by the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Memorial University.

There are also links with Carleton and Trent Universities, and informal contacts right across Canada, many of them forged by the 'Experience Canada' study tour, funded by Northern Telecom, which between 1985 and 1989 enabled 50 Edinburgh students to see Canada at first hand. At the same time, many Canadian students visit Edinburgh, and there are graduate theses in progress in English literature and in sociology.

Major conference programme

The Edinburgh Centre also has a major conference programme. In recent years, it has hosted two meetings for outside organisations: the Tenth Anniversary Conference of the British Association for Canadian Studies (BACS) in 1985, and the Seventh Atlantic Canada Studies Conference in 1988. Sponsored by Northern Telecom, in 1984 and 1985 the Centre organised two satellite-linked conferences with Canadian universities, Carlton and Queen's on the theme 'Technology and Social Change'.

Other major gatherings have marked the 150th anniversary of Canada's 1837 rebellions and been dedicated to such topics as The 19th century Canadian city, social control in 20th century



Edinburgh University's Centre of Canadian Studies is charmingly located in an eighteenth century house in George Square.

Canada and constitutional protection of human rights. Small though it is, the Centre is widely known. In Britain, the BBC turns to Edinburgh when it needs someone to explain the issues behind fur-trapping to the millions who listen to Jimmy Young on Radio 2, or to attempt a three-minute exposition of Meech Lake on the World Service.

The Edinburgh Centre attracts attention in Canada too. When students in *Canadian Studies 2* debated whether Prince Edward Island should get a bridge to the mainland, the CBC in Charlottetown rang to ask what they thought. And an Edinburgh seminar dedicated to Hamilton, Ontario, sparked a feature article in the local daily newspaper.

Innovation has long been the hallmark of the Edinburgh Centre. Some of its initiatives have been aimed at fostering good fellowship, while others – such as its series of public lectures on Canadian topics in French – have been intended to draw attention to Canada's bicultural identity. The *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, official publication of BACS, was launched in Edinburgh in 1986 and continues to be produced by the Centre.

What of the future? Edinburgh's Centre is now widely recognised as one of the symbols of Canada's academic standing in the world at large. As higher education continues to develop in the 1990s, it is likely that programmes like Canadian studies will be among the growth areas. The Centre of Canadian Studies at Edinburgh is well placed to take a leadership role in this development, and stands ready to do so. 