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THE BEAUTY OF BOOKS
Elegant texts on display

MAPPING SCOTLAND'S PAST
Win a book in our competition

DISCOVER

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland • www.nls.uk • Issue 30 Winter 2015



PLAGUE!

Experience the terror of disease and death down
the centuries in our winter exhibition

WHERE BOOKS COME TO LIFE



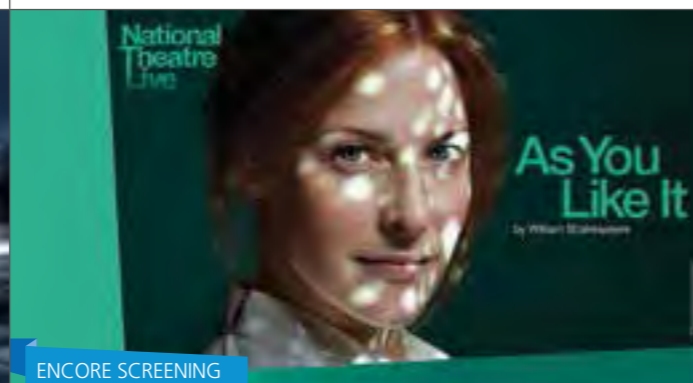
Sat 5 to Thu 31 December FESTIVAL THEATRE



Mon 1 to Sat 6 February KING'S THEATRE



Mon 29 February to Sat 5 March KING'S THEATRE



Tue 8 March FESTIVAL THEATRE



Thu 31 March to Sat 2 April FESTIVAL THEATRE



Tue 19 to Sat 23 April KING'S THEATRE



Tue 26 to Sat 30 April KING'S THEATRE



Mon 30 May to Sat 4 June KING'S THEATRE

WELCOME



DISCOVER
ISSUE 30 WINTER 2015

CONTACT US
We welcome all comments, questions, submissions and subscription enquiries. Please write to us at the National Library of Scotland address below or email discover@nls.uk

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ISSN 1751-5998 (print)
ISSN 1751 6005 (online)

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The National Library of Scotland
is a registered Scottish charity.
Scottish Charity No. SC011086
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Get up close to the horror of the bubonic plague – as well as a host of other contagious diseases – without risking your health

Catch it while you can

In our modern world, it's hard for us to comprehend the horror of an epidemic so severe it could wipe out a fifth of the urban population. That, however, is exactly what happened when the plague swept across Scotland 370 years ago.

The epidemic was among the most serious ever to strike the country, but certainly not the last.

From 11 December, Plague! the National Library of Scotland's winter exhibition will tell the story of how the country has coped with outbreaks of the Black Death, cholera, typhus, smallpox and other feared infectious diseases.

Our Rare Books Curator, Anette Hagan, has called upon our diverse collections of printed books, pamphlets, manuscripts, maps, photographs, illustrations and moving images to show the impact of contagious diseases from the 14th century through to the 20th century.

Elsewhere in this issue, we showcase our recent acquisition of delightful intricate pencil sketches from the mid-19th century by a German artist on his tour of Scotland.

The Library is also involved in publishing two new books of historical maps, one based on Glasgow through the ages and the other on the Scottish railway network.

And if you were in any doubt about the beauty of the printed word, take a look at our feature on beautiful books, including the products of the private presses of the late 19th century arts and crafts movement.

Enjoy your issue of *Discover* and all the events coming up at the Library over the winter.

Dr John Scally, National Librarian
e: NationalLibrarian@nls.uk



THE ANSWER IS IN OUR ARCHIVE...

What remedy for anaemia, advertised in a magazine for First World War soldiers, is still manufactured today?
Email your answer to discover@nls.uk or tweet us @natlibscot using the hashtag #natlibquizz



THE CLUES



WIN A BOOK!
A winner will be picked at random to win a copy of *Rax Me That Buik*, a lively book highlighting the Library's eclectic Scottish collections, by Iain Gordon Brown. To be in with a chance, send your answer by 31 January, 2016.

Lose yourself in our maps.
Discover David Livingstone.



The National Library of Scotland.
Discover the world in one place.

www.nls.uk

National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

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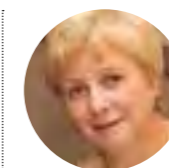


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Love later life

Age Scotland's aim is to help Scotland's people enjoy a better later life. We inspire and support everyone in Scotland to make the most of later life and build communities for all ages.

We help develop and mentor local groups and projects, creating places and activities that bring people together as a community. This, in turn, helps combat loneliness and isolation, and brings joy and a renewed sense of purpose into older people's lives and support to others who need it most.

We create vital, free information on a range of issues such as community care and benefits, to help older people make informed choices in their lives.

We also provide opportunities for older people to challenge disadvantage and unfairness - ensuring that their ideas for a better Scotland reach the ears of those who need to hear them.

However, almost half of our work would not be possible without people remembering Age Scotland in their wills. When you visit your solicitor, and you have taken care of your loved ones, please consider leaving a gift in your will to Age Scotland.

Find out more about us at www.agescotland.org.uk

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Charity No: SC010100



NEWS

Gaelic Mod Announcement + Winter Dementia Events + Strategy Update + Curator's Choice + Scots Scriever

From America to our archives

The Library has welcomed its first Fulbright scholar, who begins a six-month residency in our archives, working on his new book.

Kirk McAuley, a native of upstate New York and Associate Professor in the English Department at Washington State University, overcame stiff competition to secure a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to fund his research. The rigorous selection process began almost a year before Kirk's arrival, and was overseen by the Fulbright Commission and the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES).

"It's a great honour to be here as a Fulbright scholar, and a pleasure to be based in Scotland," said Kirk. "Obviously, there's the strength that the Library has in Scottish literature and culture, but it's also just a really wonderful environment. I've worked in other archives and this one is particularly pleasant and accommodating."

In what will be his second book – tentatively titled *Invasive Species: The Economy and Ecology of British Empire Writing* – Kirk will offer 'eco-critical' readings of select 18th and 19th century texts, supported by material in the Library's extensive archive.

The project explores resonances between these materials and contemporary ecological crises. "It looks at what these texts tell us about



● I will focus mainly on Scottish authors who composed their texts at the so-called edges of the British empire ●

KIRK MCAULEY (PICTURED ABOVE)

pressing environmental issues such as biological invasion, crop monoculture, and soil erosion and depletion, among others," Kirk said.

"I will focus mainly on Scottish authors who composed their texts at the so-called edges of the British Empire: the Caribbean, Africa, and the South Pacific. So, for example, one key figure is James Grainger, a Scottish physician who migrated to St Christopher in the West Indies and wrote a lengthy poem about the

cultivation of sugar cane. This particular piece is interesting because it both propagandises British investment in the sugar revolution and laments the accidental introduction of non-native species, including rats and monkeys."

The Library has entered an agreement to take in one Fulbright scholar a year for the next four years. It is hoped the programme will raise the Library's profile in the United States and strengthen links with academia.

Chris Taylor (pictured left), who is in charge of the Library's international collections, said: "We're honoured to be associated with Kirk's research. The hope is that scholars will go back and speak positively about their experience at the Library, and more generally about their time in Scotland."



Youth employment from the perspective of a young journalist

For young people today, finding employment is both difficult and frustrating, writes Morag Robertson. It's a problem that is recognised at government level as well as in organisations – and families – across Scotland.

In order to play its part in the wider youth employment strategy, and to introduce younger people to a library career, the Library asked young people how they viewed library work and a potential career. This revealed a stereotype: librarians read books, drink coffee and tell people to be quiet. It was clear that the Library had to engage with the stereotype. It commissioned Caitlin Delves, a young film maker, to make short films about the work of the Library. Library staff went out to career fairs and brought young people into the Library to see for themselves what happens. Staff also use commercial contracts to ask suppliers to offer work experience to young people. The Library has recognised the difficulties and is constantly implementing strategies to help boost employability.



Watch our videos at www.youtube.com/user/NLofScotland



Library Social

A programme of free events for people affected by dementia

From October 2015, the National Library of Scotland has been involved in developing and implementing a new programme of free events across four major heritage sites in Edinburgh for people affected by dementia.

Library Social is part of an initiative developed by the Library in partnership with National Galleries of Scotland, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and National Museums Scotland. Once a month, each site invites visitors with dementia, along with their friends, families and supporters, to attend a special session.

The programme started in October, with storyteller Allison Galbraith facilitating a session about the history of food and drink in Scotland, relating to the Library's 'Lifting the Lid' exhibition. In November, the theme was Good reads: Robert Louis Stevenson, John Buchan and other favourite writers, with participants encouraged to bring their own books to form an impromptu and alternative reading group.

The next Library Social event takes place on 11 December, with a look at Football: Scotland's dream team, 1945-1980, and future events will include a celebration of the poetry and songs of Robert Burns in January, a look at some of the Library's most beautiful books in February, and a journey through the world of comics in March.

Contact each venue for more details about their own events, and check www.nls.uk/events/workshops-and-tours for information about Library Social events.

TO BOOK
A PLACE, PHONE
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@NLS.UK

RARE GAELIC 15TH CENTURY MANUSCRIPT IS TRANSFORMED

The unique volume is now fit to be digitised safely

A unique volume of Gaelic text from the National Library of Scotland's collections has undergone an extensive conservation treatment, repairing centuries of wear and damage.

The Glenmasan manuscript is a 15th century Gaelic manuscript, containing various Scottish Gaelic literary texts, and is considered particularly significant because of its age and rarity.

Although it had been identified as a priority for digitisation, the poor condition of the manuscript meant that it needed extensive repair and stabilisation work before this process could be carried out in order to preserve this item for future generations.

The manuscript was taken apart, cleaned, relaxed, flattened and repaired using



BEFORE

several techniques, some of which were created specifically for this project.

Arguably the most challenging aspect of the process was repairing the large holes near the spine, the edges of which were curled and discoloured.

The conservation treatment has allowed the manuscript to be digitised safely. It has also put the manuscript in a condition that is much more legible for future readers and can be handled safely without causing damage to the volume.



AFTER

Our Mod Fringe success

Online announcement

A major project to digitise hundreds of Gaelic items and make them available online has been completed by the National Library of Scotland in a move that will help to strengthen the language.

It has resulted in every known out-of-copyright Gaelic item in the National Library's collection being digitised. That amounts to some 600 newly digitised items dating back to the 17th century that will now be free to consult and download by anyone who visits the Library's website.

The new resource was launched at the Royal National Mod in Oban by the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Dr Alasdair Allan. This was part of the Library's participation in



Jennifer Giles (left) with a member of the public at the Library's information stand

the annual celebration of Gaelic linguistic and cultural heritage.

Two public events were held as part of the Mod Fringe and the Library had an information stand in the main venue for five days.

This gave an opportunity for Library staff to demonstrate what can be found in the new digital resource and to explain

how current Gaelic and local publications are added to the collections. People attending the Mod were told how they can help by informing staff of any local leaflets, newsletters, websites and information on social media so they can be collected for the national published archive.

An Comunn Gàidhealach recently donated its archive

to the Library, and the event gave the Library an opportunity to thank An Comunn for this very generous donation to the nation. A creative writing and Gaelic language skills workshop was also held as part of an ongoing partnership between the Library and the Moniach Mhor Creative Writing Centre.

Jennifer Giles, General Collections Curator, said: "These events, along with our information stand, gave the Library a wonderful opportunity to work in partnership with An Comunn Gàidhealach and Moniach Mhor, and also to raise the profile of our Gaelic collections within the Gaelic community. They also generated lots of excellent ideas for future collaborative work, and we thank both organisations for their help."

[The newly digitised Gaelic books can be found at bit.ly/gaelicbooks](http://bit.ly/gaelicbooks) and email j.giles@nls.uk with any information about Gaelic materials

We're going global

The National Library of Scotland is gearing up to put a third of its collection of 24 million items online in the next 10 years, as part of The Way Forward: 2015-2020 strategy.

The aim is to make the centuries of knowledge and learning held within the National Library available online to everyone, as part of the plan to develop into a global digital destination.

The process of digitising not only manuscripts and rare books, but maps, sound archives, and business information and databases, will be one of the biggest programmes of its kind anywhere in Europe. The Library's long term aim is to make as much material available online as possible.

"The internet has created a revolution in how people expect to be able to access information," said National Librarian, Dr John Scally. "We want them to be able to connect to our collections from wherever they are. We are committed to removing as many barriers as possible that prevent people

accessing our collections and services."

The Library already has a strong online presence and has digitised a number of its iconic items, including the last letter of Mary Queen of Scots, the Order for the massacre of Glencoe, the first books printed in Scotland in the 16th century, the first atlas of Scotland and First World War official photographs.

Traffic to its website has doubled in the past five years to more than three million visits annually. This new digital strategy will attract even more visitors. It will also mean that fragile items that can be damaged

through physical contact can be viewed safely with the original being preserved.

"At no time has it been easier to share the story of Scotland with a global audience," said Dr Scally.

"This new strategy seeks to harness technological developments to achieve the central aim of the National Library – to provide access to knowledge that is inspiring, accessible and relevant to anyone, whether living in or interested in Scotland."

More information is available at www.nls.uk/the-way-forward