



# The future of conservation

*Who Do You Think You Are?* producer Alex Graham is a man who knows the value of well-preserved records. And with his support, we are training three new conservators to ensure future generations can explore their cultural heritage

**W**hile our collections speak for themselves, much of our work relies on a busy team of people behind the scenes. This year, we took on three enthusiastic trainees to help us preserve our most vulnerable sound, moving image and paper collections.

They share our passion for preserving cultural heritage, and while they get to learn from our experts, we benefit from their fresh perspectives.

Alex Graham, a television producer who was responsible for the hit series *Who Do You Think You Are?*, funded the traineeships – the single biggest private investment the National Library of Scotland has had so far for helping young

people into employment. Alex cites a love of libraries from a young age, and the assistance he received in producing the series – which could not have been made without the dedication of hundreds of years of archivist time.

"I'm also interested in preserving vanishing skills – not preserving in a museum sense in aspic, but by harnessing new technology," he said. "Just as the technology is changing – and there's a whole generation now for whom working in a digital world is second nature, the so-called 'digital natives' – there is still the challenge of the vanishing analogue world.

"I'm fascinated about the encounters between the technologies of different ages. What's really exciting with these

apprenticeships is that they're learning the skills to, for example, use state-of-the-art technology to turn a wax cylinder into a digital audio file."

The Library received more than 40 applications for each post, demonstrating the shortage of opportunities available to young people in the libraries and archives sector.

Here, the Alexander Graham Trainees reflect on the unique nature of the traineeships which combine the learning of necessary and precise technical skills with a creative assignment.

Jarvis, based at the Library's Moving Image Archive at Kelvin Hall, is working on restoring and digitising the 1980s Grampian TV (now STV North) Archive. Most of the footage is on VHS tape, which,





Jarvis, Nicola and Claire meet Alex Graham. Below, Claire in the workshop



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ALEX GRAHAM

In 2016, the British Film Institute warned it was at risk of being lost forever within five years. Jarvis – an aspiring filmmaker – told us how he has found “watching thousands of hours of film so beneficial”.

He added: “The raw, unedited footage is incredible. The competition for news was rife at this time, so the news outlets would all be competing to try to draw you in. It means there's a lot of footage of some quite gruesome things – car accidents, oil disasters and house fires – which needs to be edited.”

Claire is nearing the end of her nine-month internship in the conservation workshop at George IV Bridge. She has been assessing and treating a sample of the Library's collection of two million newspapers. “Newspapers were only made to last a day, of course,” she said.

“One of their components is acid, which causes them to self-destruct. Big binding buckles and straps have also torn big chunks of material. But newspapers are the Library's most frequently requested collection and so accessibility is key. Everything I'm doing is with a view to them being used and handled again.”

Nicola, the latest to join us for her traineeship, will be working to digitise our collection of 3,000 shellac discs – brittle and obsolete carriers which can easily be damaged or broken. She will be trained by an expert audio engineer who is one of very few still in possession of these skills.

By the end of her time at the National Library she will have made incredibly rare recordings of music hall entertainers, Highland reels and Scots medleys available for the first time.

Alex added: “Meeting the apprentices, and feeling the excitement and passion with which they talk, you can see that they're learning, you can see them growing in confidence. Their horizons are being expanded and that is quite moving.

“It's a fantastic thing to be part of something which is helping people to grow and develop their skills.”



# Showcase for Scots and Gaelic during International Year of Indigenous Languages

For the United Nations' celebration, our Scots Scriever calls for a couthie blether among our nationally important collections... Yer walcome!

**F**àilte gu Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba... Walcome tae the National Liberie O Scotland! Designated by the United Nations as the International

Year of Indigenous Languages, this year sees institutions around the world taking part in promoting minority languages in order to "raise awareness of them, not only to benefit the people who speak these languages, but also for others to appreciate the important contribution they make to the world's rich cultural diversity".

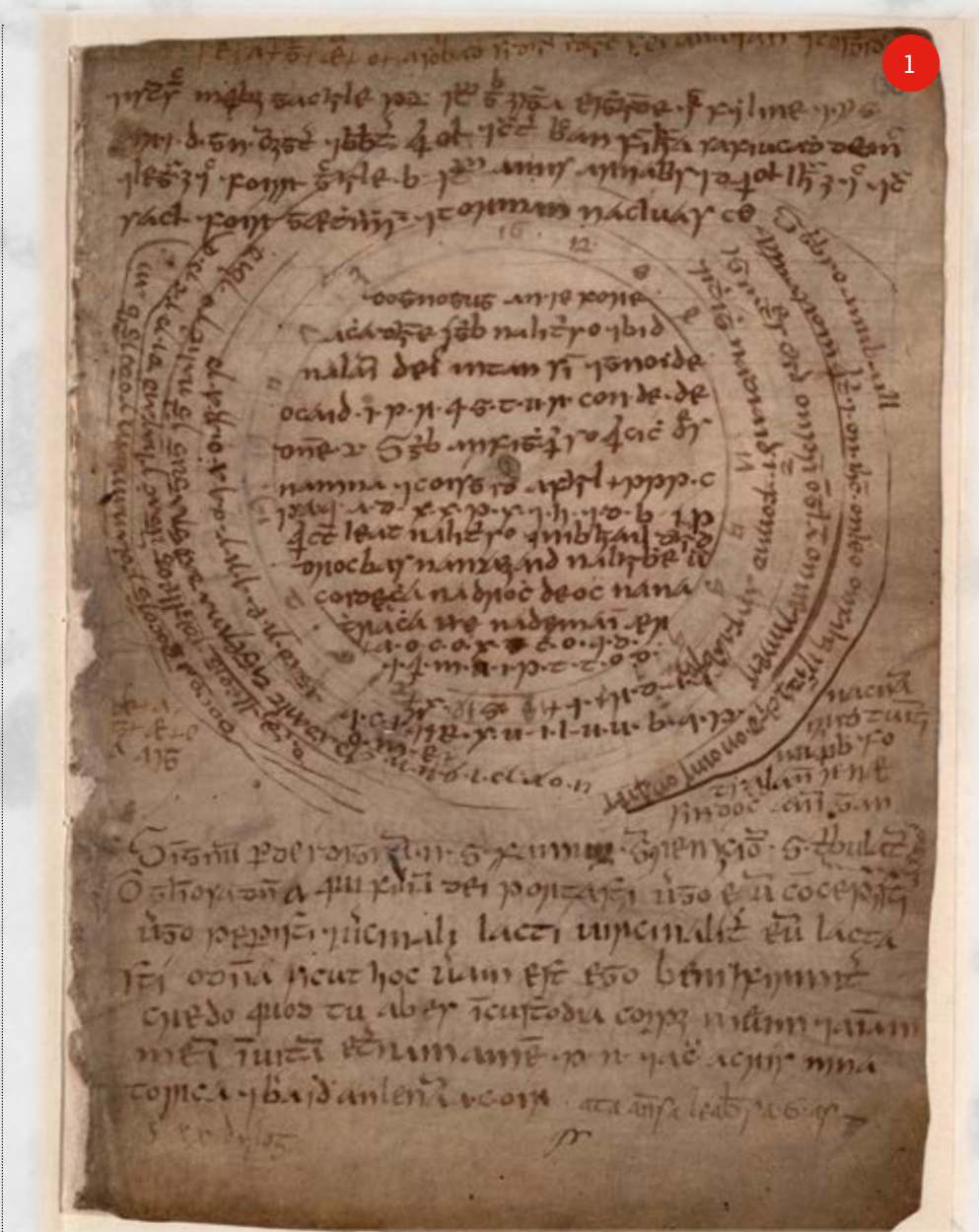
To mark the Year of Indigenous Languages, we will be showcasing our Scots and Gaelic collections through events, new resources and other promotional activity.

We hold collections of national importance in both Scots and Gaelic, so it places us in prime position to celebrate the contribution both languages have made to Scotland's cultural heritage.

And with the large number of Scots and Gaelic items already added to our digital gallery, people all over the world can browse and enjoy even more of our collections than ever before.

To kick things off, we have produced a Scots version of our Library leaflet – translated by Michael Dempster, the resident Scots Scriever – as a small step towards giving Scots a visible presence in our buildings.

Also throughout the year, the Scriever will be running Scots café events in







2

Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as further afield. These are friendly, informal drop-in sessions open to anyone with an interest in learning and speaking Scots to have a blether (chat) in couthie (sociable) surroundings. Keep an eye out on our social media channels for details of venues and times.

In the meantime, visit Wee Windaes ([wee-windaes.nls.uk](http://wee-windaes.nls.uk)), our dedicated dual language Scots/English website showcasing digitised items from our collections written in Scots from the 15th to the 20th centuries.

We have a world-class body of Gaelic material in our collections. Gaelic manuscripts held in the National Library date from the Middle Ages to the present time, with the older manuscripts forming the largest collection of late medieval Scottish Gaelic manuscripts in the world.

Our range of modern Gaelic manuscripts continues to grow as we collect the archives of literary authors and cultural institutions. We also hold well over 3,000 printed works of Gaelic interest, including books written in Gaelic and other Celtic languages,

### 1. GAELIC CHARMS

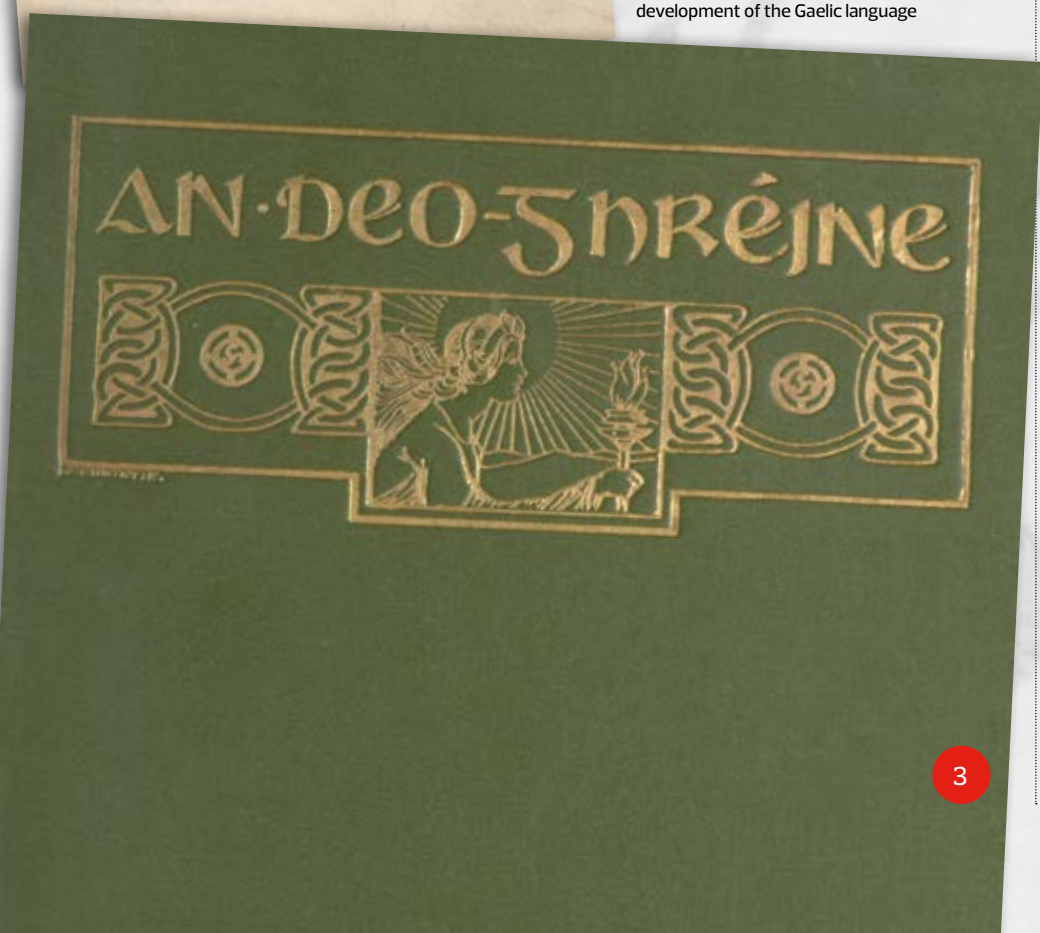
Part of a medical compendium assembled by the Beaton family of Mull, hereditary Gaelic physicians to the Scottish kings

### 2. ORAIN GHAIÐHEALACH

Gaelic songbook published in 1804

### 3. AN DEO-GRÉINE

Official monthly magazine of An Comunn Gàidhealach, founded in Oban in 1891 as a vehicle for the preservation and development of the Gaelic language



3

## Throughout the year, the Scots Scribever will be running Scots café events in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

as well as books about the Gaels, their language, literature, culture and history. Many of the items are dispersed throughout the collections.

The richness of the Library's holdings of Gaelic publications has been much enhanced over the years by the addition of a number of important special collections of Gaelic and Gaelic-related material. These include the Ossian Collection, the Blair Collection, the Matheson Collection and the Oban Cathedral Collection.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig has approved the second edition of our Gaelic Language Plan – with a range of initiatives taking us up to 2024.

In October, we will be meeting and greeting attendees to the Royal National Mòd, taking place in Glasgow, with a stand showcasing our Gaelic collections and resources including our new Gaelic music learning resource Ceòl nan Gàidheal. As part of the Mòd Fringe programme, we will have a range of activities at Kelvin Hall including a display of manuscript, rare book, music and modern collection items along with music workshops for primary schools.

Whether you are interested in Scots, Gaelic or both, we've got a kist o treasures waiting for you at the Library so thig a-steach, come awa in!

### PRINTED RARITIES

The oldest printed Gaelic book held by the Library is a translation of John Calvin's *Catéchisme de l'Eglise de Genève*.

The Gaelic version, *Adtimchiol an chreidimh comhaghalluidhedar an maighiser, agas an leanamh*, was produced in 1631 by the Edinburgh printer John Wreittoun. We hold the only known copy of this, the second work ever printed in Gaelic.

It's worth noting that in 1631, nearly 70 years had elapsed since the printing of the first book in Gaelic (Bishop John Carswell's translation into Gaelic of the *Book of Common Order* or 'Knox's Liturgy', originally published in 1560).

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Sept '19

### OCTOBER '19

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7AQ  
10am-4.30pm £1

### NOVEMBER '19

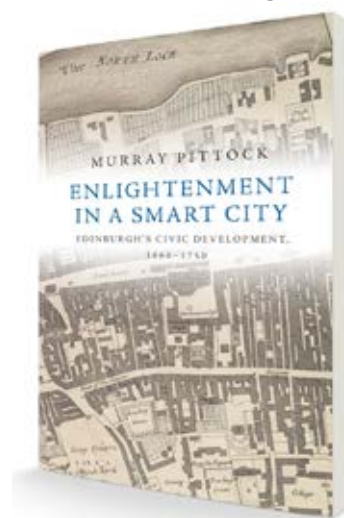
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# 25 YEARS OF THE ELIZABETH SOUTAR BOOKBINDING COMPETITION

The Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding competition was established by the National Library in 1993 to support excellence in craft bookbinding, with the first prizegiving ceremony taking place in May 1994.

It was generously sponsored by Mrs Elizabeth A Clark (formerly Soutar) of Moray – in memory of her late parents – from 1993 until her death in 2008. Thanks to a bequest from her, the competition has continued with support from the Magnus and Janet Soutar Fund.

The competition was initially only open

to UK residents, but in 1995 was extended to include entries from the European Union. It has aimed to encourage the practice and development of binding skills which display individual expression and originality. Each binding must be the entrant's own work, without any collaboration.

The panel of judges, who come from the worlds of publishing and bookbinding, as well as from Scottish libraries, select a best creative and a best craft binding, with additional prizes on offer for the best student entrants. The winning bindings are subsequently donated to the Library's

special and commissioned bindings collection.

There are no restrictions on the materials to be used to create each binding. The Library has thus been fortunate to receive visually stunning and highly original examples of bookbinding over the last 25 years, as can be seen from the examples reproduced here.

[More details on the competition and how to enter can be found on the Library's website: \[www.nls.uk/events/annual-competitions/bookbinding\]\(http://www.nls.uk/events/annual-competitions/bookbinding\)](http://www.nls.uk/events/annual-competitions/bookbinding)

Paul Charles Delrue, Remembering Charles Rennie Mackintosh was the first winner of the competition



Tom McEwan, Faust, Best Overall Prize 2007

Claudia Richter, Song of Myself, Best Craft Prize – Overall Category 2016







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The resources available on our website are vast and growing, including digital versions of reference works, full-text facsimiles and business databases.

If you live in Scotland and register with the Library, many of these resources are freely available.

Additional conditions may apply in line with our licence agreements.

We also hold websites in the UK domain web archive, and articles or chapters from e-books and e-journals. Library card holders can view this at our George IV Bridge and Kelvin Hall sites.

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# Shellac in the old routine

We hold more than 6,000 78rpm discs in our collections, ranging from the early 1900s up to 1960 and covering many of the well-known and lesser-known musicians, singers and entertainers of the era.

Most of the National Library of Scotland's 78s are part of the Dean-Myatt Collection. William Dean-Myatt is a record collector based in the West Midlands, who acquired his vast collection over 70 years.

From an initial interest in jazz, his special interest in 78s of Scottish music stemmed from his familiarity with music played by his relatives north of the border.

His vast research resulted in the creation of the Scottish Vernacular Discography, available on our website: [www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-discography](http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-discography)

The Dean-Myatt Collection is now fully catalogued and details are available to view on Library Search: [nls.uk/catalogues](http://nls.uk/catalogues)

Meanwhile, we are digitising many of our discs and soon people will be able to listen to Scotland's musical past on our website.



1

1. Millhead nam bràithrean; Joan Mackenzie; Glasgow: Gaelfonn, c.1960



2

2. Ball O' Kirriemeer; Willie Kemp; London: Beltona, 1937.



3

3. The Railway Fireman; Harry Gordon; London: Beltona, 1930.



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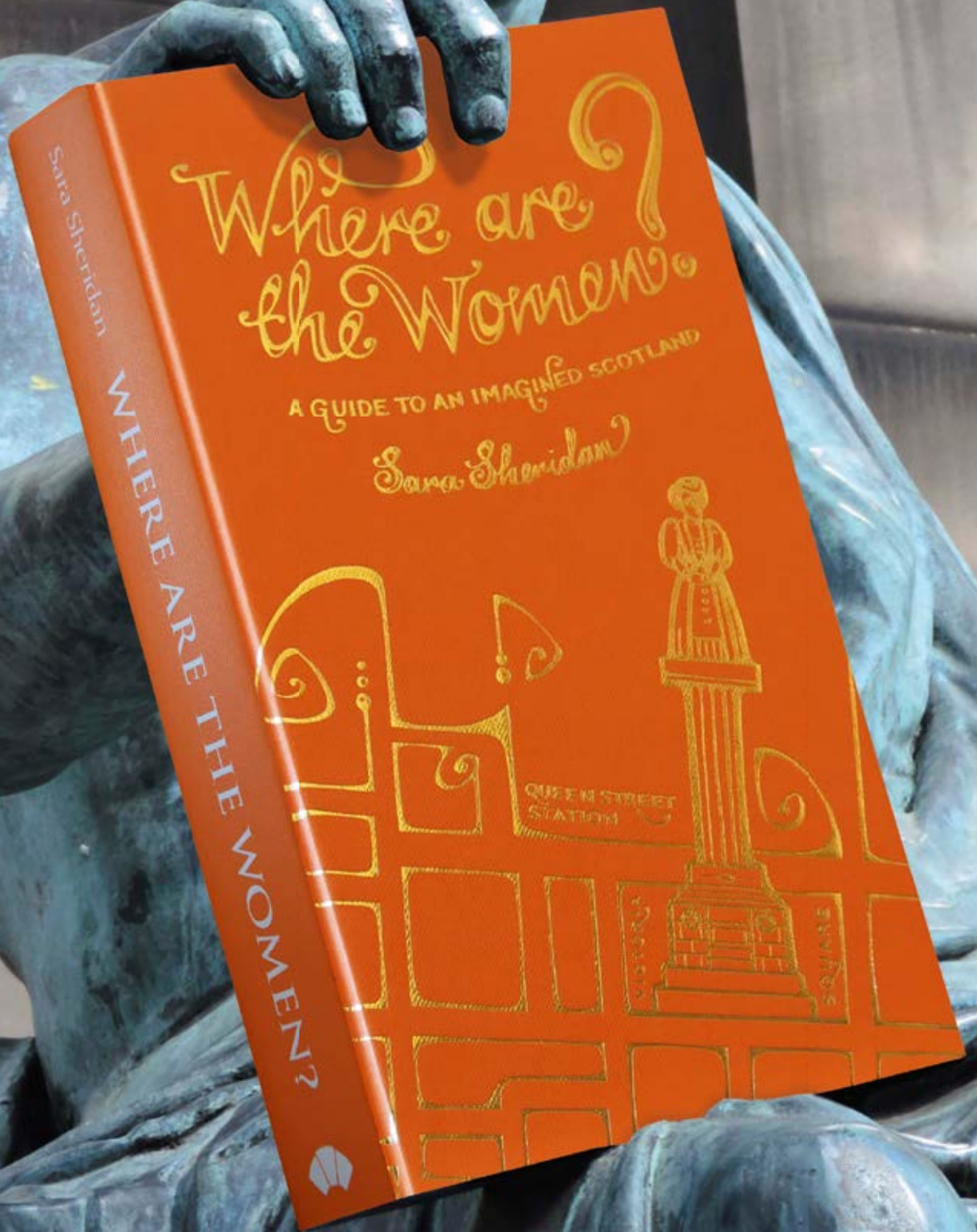
4. Highland Schottische; Peter Wyper; New York: Columbia-Rena, 1907



5

5. Crookit Bawbee; Maggie Robertson and P.S. Richardson; London: Regal, 1911.





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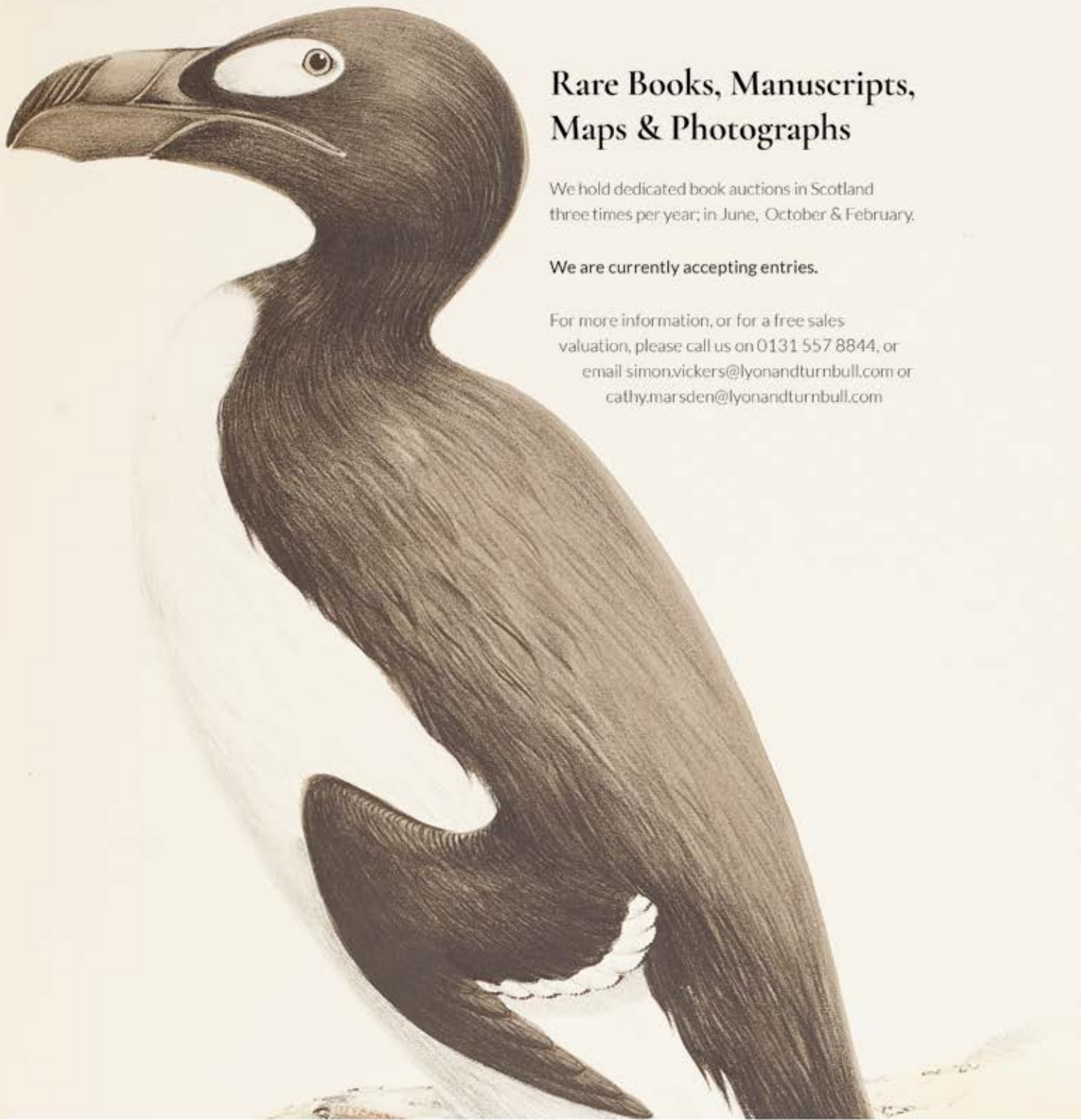
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