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1457-1744

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Collections, Research,
News and Events at the
National Library of Scotland

ISSUE 4
SPRING 2007

nls



Digging up Darien

Following Scotland's failed colonists

A letter to Byron

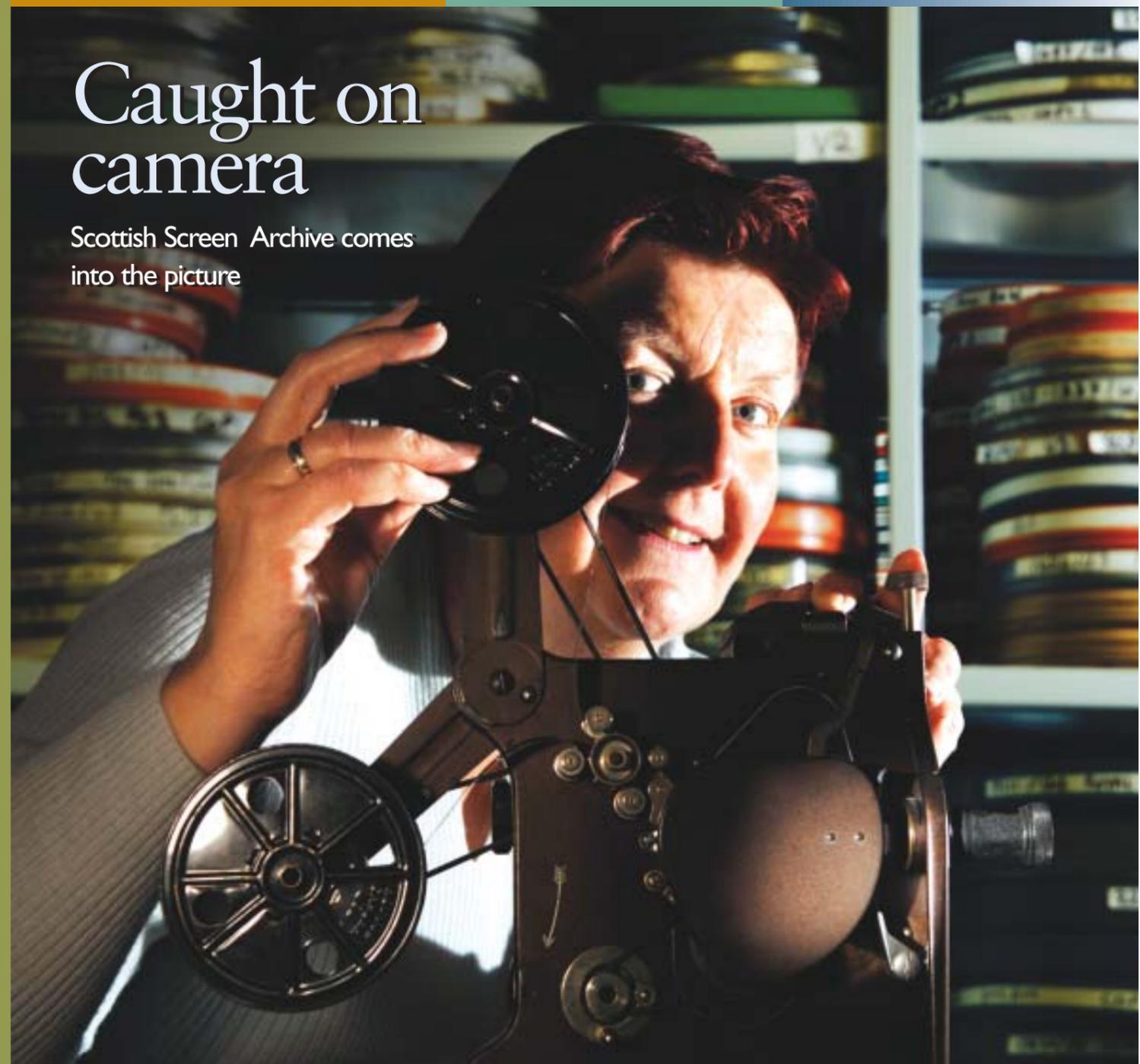
A working poet addresses a legend

Digital collections:

The gold you can't hold

Caught on camera

Scottish Screen Archive comes into the picture



Foreword



As the most recent addition to the Senior Management Team of NLS, I have not been part of the fabric of this institution much longer than *Discover NLS* which, with this issue, celebrates its first birthday as the Library's primary printed communication tool with its customers. I am pleased to report that this fine magazine has already received widespread praise not just from its readership but from the industry. In November 2006, *Discover NLS* was highly commended by the Periodical Publishers Association Scotland in three categories – Best Magazine Design (Business and Professional), Best New Magazine of the Year and Professional Magazine of the Year.

The Library is looking forward to the Scottish Screen Archive joining the NLS family. Janet McBain, whose feature introduces us to its work, recently won the award for the Outstanding Achievement in Film at the Lloyds TSB BAFTA Scotland Awards.

Other features cover a wide range of the Library's collections and expertise from Darien to Fort George and from cholera to digital treasures.

Some of the fruit of writer-in-residence Ken Cockburn's work with the John Murray Archive (JMA) receives an airing in this issue. The JMA project has an increasingly noticeable impact on the work of the Library and, through our digitisation, education and outreach programmes, on individuals and communities throughout Scotland and far beyond. This £33.2 million project has received considerable public support leading us to launch the public phase of a fundraising campaign this spring to secure the final £6.5 million required from philanthropic sources. That is, dear reader, from good people like you...

Thank you for the interest you continue to take in the work and wellbeing of the National Library of Scotland.

Giles Dove
Director of Development

Contributors in this issue



Janet McBain is Scottish Screen Archive Curator. A graduate in Scottish history, and former Survey Officer for the National Register of Archives, she joined the Scottish Film Council in 1976 as founding curator of the Archive. She is the author of *Pictures Past - Recollections of Scottish Cinema Going* and writes regularly on Scottish film history. For ten years she was the guest presenter on Grampian Television's local history series *The Way it Was*.

Nat Edwards is John Murray Archive Programme Manager. He has been fascinated by the story of the Darien Scheme since first reading a mention of it in Catherine Carswell's biography of Robert Burns. When an opportunity came to further explore Darien on a Panamanian naval ship, he jumped at it. His first book on Darien, *Caledonia's Last Stand*, is published by Luath Press.



Michael Hance is Director of the Scots Language Centre and a former Director of the Saltire Society. He grew up in Aberdeen and graduated with an MA in Politics from the University of Edinburgh. Michael learned Scots at school, 'in the playground not the classroom'. He has a long standing interest in languages issues and is presently studying Norwegian and Finnish.



Paul Cunnea is Digital Collections Development Co-ordinator at NLS. His responsibilities include managing the online resources that the Library purchases and collects and the websites that we archive. In his spare time he enjoys cycling, hill-walking, music, travelling and being the last line of defence in the NLS football team.



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Cover Image:

Scottish Screen Archive Curator Janet McBain in the vaults at their site in Glasgow's Hillington.



A word on Shelfmarks

Shelfmarks are references which identify the location of specific collection items (usually a series of numbers and letters e.g. MS.1007; 5.144(2); RB.s.788). You can use an item's shelfmark to search for it in our online catalogues, to order it up in our reading rooms, and as part of any reference to that specific NLS copy.

NLS opens the curtain on Scottish Screen

From 1 April the Library will add a whole new dimension to its collection of Scottish cultural heritage, when the Scottish Screen Archive formally merges with NLS. Scotland's moving image collection will become part of the National Library's holdings, offering researchers of 20th century Scottish culture an unprecedented wealth of material at their disposal. The Library was chosen as the natural home for the archive by both organisations' boards of trustees in 2006 in consultation with the Scottish Executive. The Executive decided last year that Scottish Screen, the archive's former custodians, would be dissolved, along with the Scottish Arts Council, to make way for a new cross-disciplinary body for the creative arts: Creative Scotland.

Archive Curator, Janet McBain welcomed the news, saying, 'NLS is a most appropriate new home for the Archive and presents us with many new opportunities for incorporating moving images into our national collections and for integrating our filmed history into the future understanding of our recent past.'

Cate Newton, NLS Director of Collection Development, added: 'I am delighted to welcome the Scottish Screen Archive to the Department of Collection Development. Its arrival will present great new opportunities for users of the Library's collections, where they can now find information about Scotland in every format from manuscript to moving images.'

The archive, its public viewing facilities and staff will remain in their premises in Hillington, Glasgow. To learn more about what the archive can offer, read the cover article on page 4.



Good prognosis for medical collections

A web resource charting Scotland's medical collections has been nominated for the UK's largest museum prize. *Scotland & Medicine: Collections & Connections*, which features examples from NLS medical collections, has been long-listed for the Gulbenkian Prize 2007. The prize annually rewards innovation in the cultural heritage sector. To visit the site, go to www.scotlandandmedicine.com. The list of ten will be whittled down to a short list of four, to be announced later in April.

The 'sleeping giant' wakes!

The Library romped to victory at the recent Communicators in Business (CiB) Scotland Awards, winning in all three of its short-listed categories. Prizes were won for Best One-Off Publication, for the NLS Annual Review 2005-2006, Best Use of the Web and for Best Communications Team. The awards were launched in 2002 to pay tribute to the best in business communication in Scotland.

In praising the entries, the judges commented that the Annual Review, 'makes the Library a rich and fascinating place to be.' The website was deemed, 'a very clean and attractive site that is easy to navigate', while likening the communications team's achievement to, 'the sleeping giant that woke up to a huge challenge.'

Director of Strategy and Communications Alexandra Miller expressed her delight at the news, saying, 'To win the CiB Awards we were judged against nominees from private and public sectors, which demonstrates that we operate very successfully alongside our commercial peer group. These awards are a further affirmation of the great efforts and achievements made by the Strategy and Communications Department, and to the terrific support we have received from colleagues across the Library.'



Mapping the way for artist in residence

NLS, in partnership with Henzteeth, an Edinburgh-based business specialising in commercial writing, has secured a grant from Arts and Business to have an artist in residence working in the Library.

Catriona Taylor is a graduate of Edinburgh College of Art and will be based primarily in the Map Library for eight weeks across April and May with a view to seeking inspiration from items in our collections to create original works of visual art. She has a particular interest in producing landscapes, but will also spend time talking to curators and viewing items from other collection areas during her residency.

Later in the year she will lead a series of NLS education and outreach workshops, including some in the Highlands as part of the Year of Highland Culture programme. Her attachment to NLS will culminate in an exhibition of work inspired by our collections early in 2008.

The grant is a Scottish Executive New Arts Sponsorship Award, which is awarded to businesses sponsoring the arts for the first time. Cate Newton, Director of Collection Development welcomed the news saying, 'We're absolutely delighted that Henzteeth selected us as their artistic partner for this venture and we look forward both to working with them and even more so to seeing the results of Catriona's time with us.'

The theme of Catriona's residency is Not Just Words, a reference to the fact that both NLS collections and the creative output of Henzteeth encompass far more than just printed text.

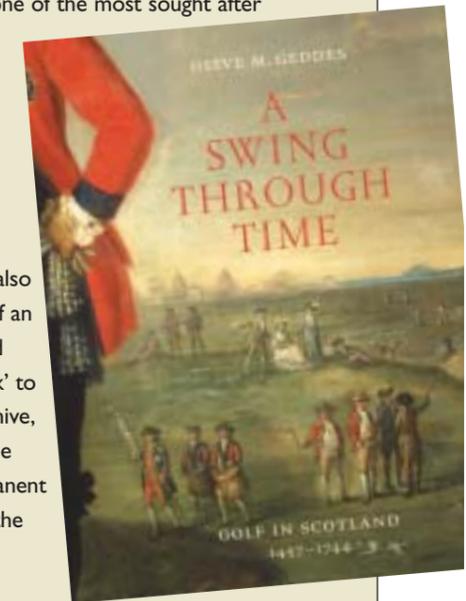
Catriona's work recently featured in the New Faces exhibition at Leith Gallery, and there will be a more in-depth article on her progress in a future issue of Discover.

Artist Catriona Taylor's work, 'Journey One'.



Publishing at NLS

The Library has re-launched its book publishing programme. After a seven year hiatus, we are delighted to announce that we will actively pursue publishing projects, both in partnership with other organisations and under our own auspices. Our maiden enterprise is a revised edition of one of the most sought after titles from our back catalogue, Olive Geddes' *A Swing Through Time: Golf in Scotland 1453-1744*, which is published jointly with NMS Publishing. June will also see the publication of an attractively illustrated 'beginner's guidebook' to the John Murray Archive, on sale in time for the opening of the permanent exhibition based on the Archive.



Can you help?

We are keen to hear from experienced freelancers (and students seeking work placements) with expertise in book design and production, editorial and proof-reading and general business management. We would also welcome contact from distributors in Scotland, the UK and overseas. If you are a commercial publisher or publishing institution who would be interested in exploring collaborative projects, we'd like to hear from you too. While Library staff will play a major role in proposing and developing book ideas, we also invite external contributors to submit proposals.

All such enquiries should be directed to Julian Stone, Marketing Communications Officer, on 0131 623 3764 or j.stone@nls.uk.

Highland life comes to Glasgow

Fonn's Duthchas (*Land and Legacy*), the exhibition celebrating highland culture through the ages, reaches Glasgow on the second stop of its tour across Scotland. This collaborative effort from our national museums, galleries and Library will also pull in to Edinburgh and Stornaway later in the year. It will be open at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum from Friday 6 April until Sunday 10 June.

Reel lives and screen savers

In the month when the Scottish Screen Archive joins NLS, collection curator Janet McBain celebrates the rich history of 20th century Scotland captured on film.

In April 2007 the Scottish Screen Archive (SSA), Scotland's national moving image collection, transfers from the stewardship of Scottish Screen to the National Library of Scotland, and in doing so fittingly closes a thirty year old circle.

In the mid 1970s the Scottish Film Council, the national body for film culture and education, established a working party chaired by the National Librarian of the time, Professor Denis Roberts. This group found that Scotland's film heritage was being lost at an alarming rate, through a combination of the physical decomposition of nitrate films made during the first fifty years of cinema, and a vacuum in acquisition. While the UK's London-based National Film Archive (NFA), established in 1935, had a responsibility to collect film from Scotland it could not commit resources to actively seek out and acquire films north of the border. The NFA's broad remit was to collect British and international cinema and was heavily weighted towards fiction films, which often meant that titles of purely Scottish interest were never collected comprehensively.

A pilot project in 1976 demonstrated the need for a film archive for Scotland that preserves our national culture on film, but also reflects local histories within Scotland. Thirty years later this moving image Archive passes into the fold of the National Library of Scotland.

The Screen Archive offers two key strengths. It reflects the lives of ordinary Scots in the 20th century ('the film century'), and it documents the achievements of Scots working with the moving image. Scotland's indigenous film production industry was predominantly non-fiction and the Archive reflects this with its volume of documentary, educational, sponsored and topical films. Scotland produced perhaps only a dozen feature films between 1900 and 1980 and sadly most of these are on the 'missing, believed lost' register.



Above, from left to right:

Frame enlargement from *Things That Happen No.1*, 1936, first in a series of monthly film magazines produced by Scottish Films Productions.

Cinema publicity stunt with usherette Dottie Kemp dressed as Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*, bathing in milk in the foyer, New Victoria Cinema, Edinburgh, 1963.

A production still from *Three Scottish Painters*, 1963, capturing Joan Eardley in her studio.

Nevertheless, the Archive contains a rich variety of material of great interest to both specialists and the general public. There are numerous genres represented within non-fiction alone, each offering a distinct perspective on our recent past.

Topicals and newsreels

Several cinema proprietors made local newsreels or 'topicals' of events in the local community served by their cinemas. Popular topics were local festivals and gala days, sports meetings, excursions and visits of dignitaries – any event that would attract crowds onto the streets. The cameraman would be instructed to get close-ups of as many faces in the crowd as possible. Shown a few nights later in the local picture house, these newsreels would draw in audiences eager to see if they could spot themselves on the silver screen. The Archive has over 400 of these local films, dating from the 1911 film of workers leaving a Dundee jute mill, to that of the Glenrothes Festival Week in 1963. Cinema newsreel production commenced just prior to First World War, with French companies Gaumont and Pathé establishing Scottish units to shoot stories for their new national weekly newsreels. The Glasgow-based cinema business, Greens Film Service, attempted to break into this

market launching the *Scottish Moving Picture News* in 1917. It only survived until the early 1920's, unable to compete with the big commercial rivals.

Educational films

Films produced for classroom teaching flourished in Scotland from the 1930s onward. Scottish local authorities were among the first in Britain to put film projectors into schools. The nucleus of the educational films in the Archive come from the Scottish Central Film Library (SCFL), a 16mm lending collection set up in 1939. SCFL distributed titles produced by the Scottish Educational Film Association (and later Educational Films of Scotland) as well as many of the commercial educational film companies. Several producers in Scotland developed specialisms and earned a living making classroom films that supported many aspects of the curriculum including geography, science, civic studies, domestic science and English.



Right: Fred Green, of Green's Film Service, visits Charlie Chaplin's studio during the shooting of *Sunnyside*, 1919.

Above: Alan Harper, founder of Campbell Harper Films of Edinburgh.

Promotional, industrial and advertising

Scottish manufacturing, retail and service industries commissioned promotional films for cinema showings, typically for trade advertising, staff training and sales. Films to promote industry and its products have been in evidence since the first years of the moving picture in the 1890s. Often simply recording the production process from raw material to finished product, these have left us with a wealth of industrial archaeology on film. While promotional films were usually the province of the commercial sector, the promotional (and 'propaganda') value of film was also appreciated and harnessed by interest groups such as the Temperance movement, the churches, and the political 'left' and government agencies. The Scottish Office's first organised venture into film as a vehicle for public information came in 1938 with Glasgow hosting of the Empire Exhibition. A set of seven films were produced for St Andrew's House by the Films of Scotland Committee and screened in the Empire Cinema at Bellahouston Park.

Drawing on the success of the pre-war Films of Scotland Committee, and the Scottish Office's experience of the power of film during wartime, a second organisation of the same name was formed in 1954 with John Grierson, the Scots documentary film pioneer on board. This new Committee's remit was to produce films to promote Scotland's social, cultural and industrial attributes, both nationally and internationally. Trade associations, national agencies and local authorities co-sponsored titles and over 30 years some 150 documentary films were produced. These films offer a collective snapshot of the fabric of post-war Scottish industrial, cultural and environmental life. They give us vivid insights into the essence of our writers, painters, sculptors, musicians and poets. Here we find Sorley MacLean and Hugh MacDiarmid reading from and discussing their work on camera, we witness the creation of Joan Eardley's iconic East End Kids painting in her studio and hear Neil Gunn musing on the influences on his writing.

Scottish town councils were using films for public education not only through commissioning classroom teaching films, but also for informing citizens about their activities. Glasgow Corporation was the most prolific with over 80 films from 1922 to 1978 covering topics such as policing, care for the elderly, education services, urban regeneration, health care, water supply and transport.

Amateur films

In 1933 the Scottish Amateur Film Festival was born, an annual showcase for independent cinéastes which was to endure for over 50 years. Scotland boasts an enthusiastic and accomplished community of amateur film makers who have documented their own lives and their country since the late 1920s. The amateur's lens has given us over the years the only existing footage of the evacuation of St Kilda, the last ride of the tramcars in our cities and the daily life of long lost communities. These and many other aspects of family life, intimately observed, give us a picture of the social fabric of our country and recall the flavour of daily life, subjects that were rarely recorded by professional film makers.

The Archive's catalogue of access copies (those that can be viewed by the public) is available to browse online. Thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, this collection is growing weekly, bringing more and more films into the public domain. Covering the length and breadth of Scotland and a wide range of subject matter there is, surely, something for everyone to rediscover and enjoy. **nls**

Discover more

You can browse the Scottish Screen Archive catalogue, Archivalive, online either at www.scottish-screen.com or via www.nls.uk.

To arrange to view material at the Archive's premises in Hillington, Glasgow, please contact Ruth Washbrook, Education and Outreach Officer on **0845 366 4614** or r.washbrook@nls.uk.

For all commercial enquiries, contact Annie Docherty, the Production Library Administrator on **0845 366 4600** or a.docherty@nls.uk.



From top to bottom: Frame enlargements from: *North East Corner*, 1946; *Seawards The Great Ships*, the Oscar winning documentary from 1960; *Lochgelly Old Age Pensioners Outing to Crook O'Devon*, 1928.

Staying abreast of the web – the Really Simple way

In the third and final instalment of **Gill Hamilton and Eric Jutrzenka's** tutorial of web-based information tools, they turn their attention to news feeds and podcasts.

Are you finding it difficult to keep up to date with the latest posts to your favourite blog? Do you keep forgetting to check if a new Russell Brand podcast is available? Or maybe you want to be kept informed about the latest exhibitions and talks at the National Library of Scotland? If so, then RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a clever little tool that can help you out.

It is best to think of RSS as like a cross between a subscription to a magazine and an old fashioned news wire. On many websites and blogs you will see a little orange RSS button (pictured) and by clicking on this you subscribe to the site's content. The modern day equivalent of the news wire ticker tape machines, the RSS feed reader then manages and consolidates your subscriptions and is automatically updated when new content is added to the websites. So when you need to know what's been happening in the world you no longer need to check lots of different sites: just open your RSS feed reader and see all the breaking news from your websites.

Web browsers such as Firefox and Internet Explorer 7 incorporate RSS feed readers that are very easy to use. Click on the RSS logo and your browser will automatically create your subscription. As the website releases new information, the browser will be updated, ready to present you with the latest news whenever you like.

Web based RSS feed readers such as Bloglines (www.bloglines.com) and Google Reader (www.reader.google.com) are also popular and particularly useful for keeping track of blogs, news and photo hosting services like flickr (www.flickr.com). To use these services you normally have to complete a simple free registration process to validate your email address. Once registered, you can then start subscribing to websites that offer RSS. You can

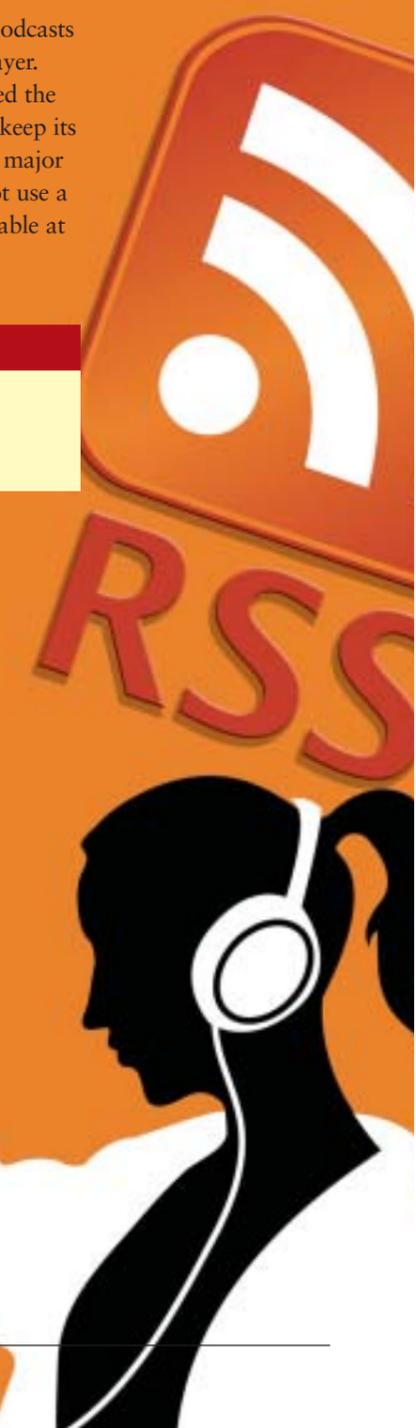
configure the feed reader to check your subscribed websites once a week or every day or even every few minutes, meaning you can keep up with news as it happens, ahead of the traditional printed and broadcast media.

The popular music download software iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes/store/) uses RSS to track updates of your subscribed podcasts. iTunes will automatically download new podcasts that you can then transfer to your mp3 player.

Several years ago the Library recognised the usefulness of RSS and developed a feed to keep its customers informed of events, exhibitions, major new projects and service updates. Why not use a feed reader to subscribe? The feed is available at www.nls.uk/news/index.html. **nls**

Discover more

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_\(file_format\)](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RSS_(file_format))
www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/help/3223484.stm



Exhibitions

Happy Birthday Miffy!

A celebration of the work of Dick Bruna

Friday 30 March – Sunday 3 June

Everybody's favourite illustrated bunny celebrates her 50th birthday with a special residency at the Library. This interactive exhibition shows how Miffy evolved from a simple sketch to entertain Dutch illustrator Dick Bruna's young son on a damp holiday into a much-loved picture-book characters and a global merchandising icon.



The John Murray Archive

From 27 Wednesday June

The writers and thinkers of John Murray's publishing firm shaped the modern world through their works of literature, science, exploration and politics. Drawing on material from the Archive, this permanent exhibition uses state-of-the-art exhibition technology to bring to life the work and lives of a changing selection of the publisher's most influential figures. Those featured in the first line-up include Lord Byron, Charles Darwin and David Livingstone.

Tea and Tigers:

Stories of Scotland and South Asia

Saturday 30 June – Sunday 30 September

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Indian independence from British colonial rule, this exhibition will explore Scotland's involvement and influence in India over the centuries. Scottish soldiers, doctors, missionaries, traders, politicians and travellers all made their mark on India. Come along and hear their stories.

Below: A painting by a Jaipur artist of the Emperor Aurangzeb watching a fight between a lion and an elephant, c. 1820.



Events

Tuesday 3 April 1-2pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

From Aesop to Miffy: Animal Magic at NLS

Rare Books Curator Eoin Shalloo delivers a lunch time talk on the furry friends to be found among our collections – especially the rabbits!

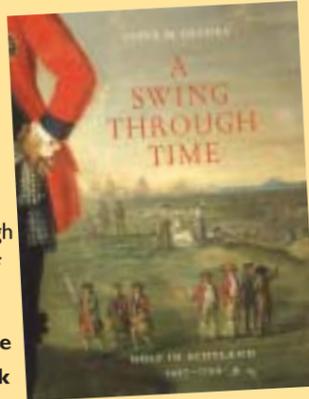
Tuesday 10 April 7pm

Venue: Causewayside

A Swing Through Time

Olive Geddes launches the revised edition of her golf history book with an illustrated talk on the Scottish origins of the game, including the formation of the first clubs in Edinburgh and the publication of the first rules of golf in 1754.

Discover readers can take advantage of an exclusive offer to buy the book at a reduced price. See the back page for more details.



Tuesday 1 May 7pm

Venue: Causewayside

Could Darien have Succeeded?

Archaeologist and broadcaster Dr Mark Horton explores the Darien Scheme and its consequences on the Act of Union, on the exact 300th anniversary of the Union.

Monday 7 May 5.15pm

Venue: The Byre Theatre, St Andrews

Treasures of the John Murray Archive

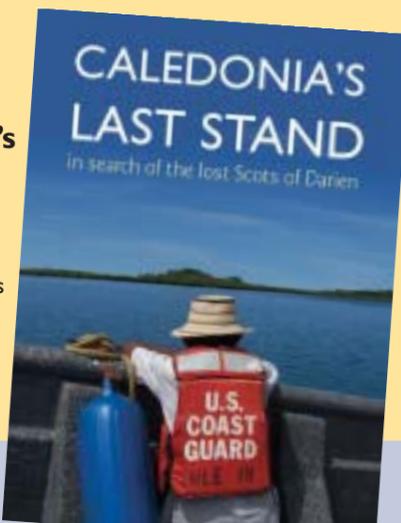
Collections Director Cate Newton presents highlights from the Archive of the 18th and 19th century publishing giant. Please contact the venue to book tickets, visit www.byretheatre.com or call 01334 475000.

Wednesday 9 May 7pm

Venue: Augustine United Church, 41 George IV Bridge

Book Launch: Caledonia's Last Stand

Nat Edwards' book retraces the desperate last steps of the Scots colonists seeking a new life in Panama's Darien. Hear his alternative take on Scotland's ill-fated colonial disaster.



Tuesday 15 May 7pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

Ghostfest: 'Deid men in Thair Companie'

Dr Joyce Miller guides us through the supernatural world of 16th and 17th century Scotland, with a talk on witches, fairies, ghosts and spirit guides.



Tuesday 29 May 7pm

Venue: Causewayside

Union of 1707 Debate

300 years on from the Union of Scotland and England, Brian Taylor chairs a panel, including leading historians Michael Fry and Christopher Whatley, debating this historical landmark.

Tuesday 5 June 7pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

The Price of Scotland: Darien, Union and the Wealth of Nations

Why did the Company of Scotland fail to establish a colony at Darien on the isthmus of Central America and how was the tragedy connected to the creation of the United Kingdom in 1707? Dr Douglas Watt examines Scotland's strange journey from Darien to parliamentary Union.



P. Mortier's map of 1700, *Carte particuliere de Isthmus ou Darien*, shows the Scots colony of Caledonia, in relation to the strategic Spanish settlements of Panama, Cartagena, Santa Maria and Portobello.

Wednesday 13 June 7pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

Book Launch: After You've Gone

Come and meet renowned author Joan Lingard who will be reading from and signing copies of her new book *After You've Gone*, an emotionally charged story of a woman torn between her husband and another man in 1920s society.

Wednesday 20 June 7pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

A Walk on the Wild Side

Get active and enjoy Scotland's great outdoors - responsibly! Helen Todd, from the Ramblers' Association Scotland, explains our landmark 'right to roam' legislation and what it really means for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and canoeists.

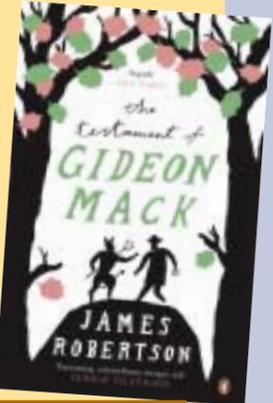


Thursday 28 June 7pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

The Bridge Readings James Robertson

James Robertson reads from his latest novel, *The Testament of Gideon Mack*. This increasingly popular author's book was chosen as one of Richard and Judy's book club titles earlier this year.



Booking a place

Admission to all events and exhibitions is free unless specified.

Our events programme sometimes changes at short notice and space is often limited, please phone or e-mail in advance to book or confirm on the **Events Line 0131 623 3845** or events@nls.uk.

A few events were awaiting confirmation as we went to press, please see our What's On leaflet or visit www.nls.uk/news for the full programme.

Learning point

Adult Learners' Week at NLS 19 May - 25 May

19 May 10am - 12pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

Illustration Masterclass with Natalie Russell

Learn first-hand how children's picture books are made from concept to finished product, with children's author and illustrator Natalie Russell.

23 May 2pm - 4pm

Venue: Causewayside

Adult Learners' Open Day

Visit NLS and discover how we can support your learning. Meet Library staff, try your hand at some activities and make suggestions for future sessions at this informal drop-in afternoon.

22 May 12.30pm - 1.30pm

Venue: George IV Bridge

From Aesop to Miffy: Animal Magic

Another opportunity to explore children's book illustrations based on animal characters, tailored specifically to adult learners but open to all.

For more information on the full range of activities for families, school groups and community groups, contact the Education and Outreach team on 0131 623 3845 or email events@nls.uk.

Booking a place

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Our events programme sometimes changes at short notice and space is often limited, please phone or e-mail in advance to book or confirm on the Events Line 0131 623 3845 or events@nls.uk.

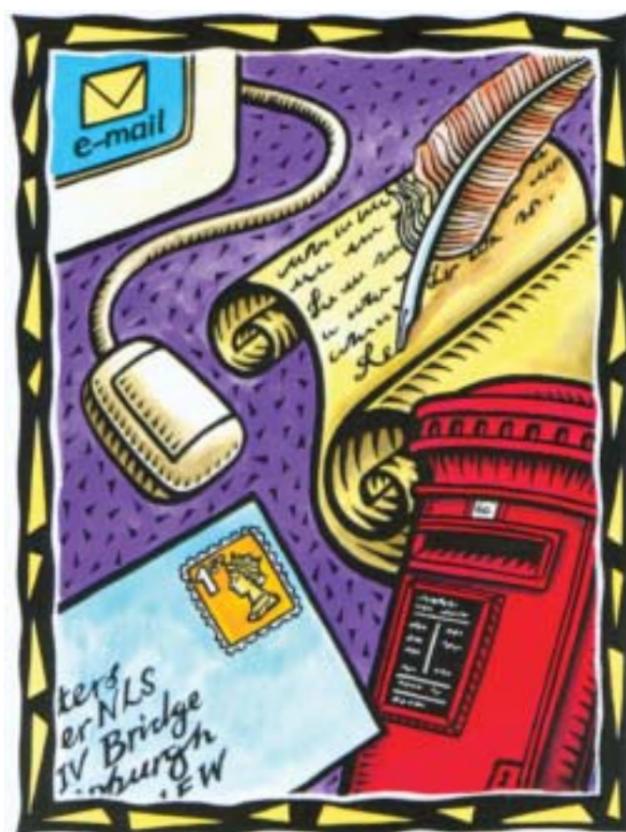
All learning workshops are free but booking is required, due to limited space.

Readers' Letters

Discover NLS welcomes your comments, questions and views, please address all correspondence to:

Julian Stone
Readers' Letters
Discover NLS
National Library of Scotland
George IV Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1EW

or e-mail: discover@nls.uk
(Please put 'Readers' letters' in the subject line)



Advertise in Discover NLS

To find out more about advertising in *Discover NLS*, please contact Julian Stone on 0131 623 3764 or email j.stone@nls.uk.



Dear Sir,

I was interested to read Daniel Gray's excellent article on the Spanish Civil War in the current issue of *Discover NLS* (which goes from strength to strength as a publication). My father, George Drever, (1910-1996), was also a member of the International Brigade, joining early in 1937, being taken prisoner at Belcete and spending 16 months in a POW camp. Our family have some interesting records of this.

We have his death certificate, issued by the Republican government in Spanish, which was sent to my grandmother after he was lost in action. Also his obituary, as a well known Leith communist, appeared in local newspapers and in the Orkney Herald at the time (both his parents were from Westray). In addition a memorial meeting was held to celebrate his life - and no doubt to raise further funds for the struggle. The story had a happy ending and he turned up very alive and was repatriated after the fall of the Republic.

In his later years he was actively involved in the International Brigade Association and represented them at events in Spain and Germany. Months before he died he was awarded, along with all surviving Brigaders, honorary Spanish citizenship.

He remained a lifelong communist and was an interviewee in Ian MacDougall's excellent book, *Voices from the Spanish Civil War: Personal Recollections of Scottish Volunteers in Republican Spain, 1936-1939*. Socialist politics remains the lifeblood of our family and his children and grandchildren are immensely proud of his part in one of the great democratic struggles of the 20th century.

All best wishes,
David Drever

Dear Sir,

In his fascinating account of Scottish volunteers in the Spanish Civil War, Daniel Gray was inevitably constrained by space from exploring all the complexities of that bitter conflict. However, while Gray was correct in implying that the Catholic hierarchy in Spain supported Franco with enthusiasm, the picture was very different in the Basque provinces. There, the Catholic leadership sided with the Republican government - and eventually paid a heavy price. When the Republic finally fell, 15 Basque Catholic priests were shot by their Falangist conquerors and 300 imprisoned.

Yours faithfully,
Jeremy Mitchell

Dear Mr Mitchell,

The issues you raise are fascinating ones.

I had hoped to cover Republican in-fighting by featuring the story of David Murray (an erudite Independent Labour Party organiser whose archive the Library holds) in the piece, but as you correctly guessed couldn't find the space to do so. In December I began writing a book on Scottish involvement in the Spanish Civil War to be published by Luath Press next year. Rest assured, I will strive to make the points raised in your letter in this much lengthier work.

Daniel Gray



A letter to Byron

Tessa Ransford introduces a literary encounter that spans three centuries, as Ken Cockburn pens a missive to Lord Byron.

Poet and former Scottish Poetry Library Assistant Director Ken Cockburn was appointed as the John Murray Archive writer-in-residence in 2006. Having spent many hours poring over Byron's letters and manuscripts, he was inspired to pen a letter of his own to the great poet, which *Discover NLS* proudly publishes here for the first time. Cockburn's missive gives a sense of Byron's continuing presence, rather than his having ossified into the past in statue or street name, as is the case in Aberdeen, where he was born and brought up.

Feeling himself drawn into Byron's orbit, Ken's letter by way of response takes in many angles, through interpersonal and incidental connections discovered from the Archive. To hold the actual originals of these letters, Ken suggests, returns the public to the private, the finished to the unfinished, seeing the game as it was seen when still being played and the outcome unknown, and to realise how our own present is itself only an interlude.

Dear Byron,

I dare say I should be drinking while writing to you, for you described yourself once as being 'of the old creed of Homer, the wine-bibber', but I am writing this in a public library rather than a public bar (more fool me, no doubt), where the serving-folk produce from behind their counter not drink but books. Easier on the purse and on the constitution, especially at my age, a sum of years which currently stands higher by ten than your own final tally.

The library is on George IV Bridge – he has a bridge named after him still, and a statue down the hill on Hanover Street. Scott has a lot to answer for. Scott himself has an extraordinary spaceship-like monument near the railway station named after one of his novels, and one of the city's two football teams is named after another. He is well memorialised, but little read, his works having been reinvented during the 20th century as romances for young people which, by implication, one would in time grow out of. There is nothing in Edinburgh named for you; they have honoured you in Aberdeen with an Avenue, a Crescent, a Park, a Square and a Terrace, all tucked away in a western suburb; in London you fare better, with six Byron Avenues alone but none, to be frank, are major thoroughfares.

My school poetry anthology contained none of your poems – still too racy, 150 years later? No Crabbe either. Such books make their points by omissions as well as inclusions. I remember your statue outside Aberdeen Grammar School, which I passed occasionally when I lived in the city as an undergraduate. I'm not sure you would be pleased to think that you have remained thus in a city you had no affection for; on the other hand, your presence is a useful reminder that one may think and act more boldly than is usually possible in that modest and practical city.

So I encountered you late, tackling *Don Juan* when I approached thirty, and had a notion to write a poem on the subject – had just written an *Orpheus* about misguided fidelity, and the figure of Don Juan suggested its opposite, misguided infidelity (less so in your version than in others), but his problems and opportunities were never mine, and the poem remained a series of notes. When I travelled for the Scottish Poetry Library, lending books to school groups, I asked borrowers if they'd like to read a poem out, and once in St Andrews, in a tower-room that was probably there in your time, a teenager read 'She Walks in Beauty'. Recently there was Leonard Cohen's version of 'We'll Go No More A Roving'; he waited till he was almost seventy to make it.

And now with this appointment I find myself in your orbit. Given this history, I followed the path I had already walked some way along, and picked up the proofs of *Don Juan* which you and Hobhouse annotated in 1819. You chose then to strike out the verses addressed to Southey, the Poet Laureate, but it is standardly printed now in every edition, and Southey is otherwise largely forgotten. Every so often someone tries to resuscitate his work and his reputation – there was a review of a new biography in the paper just the other week – but he is not read or reprinted as are you, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth and Coleridge, all lumped together as the 'English Romantics' whatever feuds existed between you at the time. Just as you were wrong about Shakespeare, Coleridge was wrong about you ('the Baron' – though he is nearer the mark with Scott, 'the Baronet') when he wrote: 'in less than a century, the Baronet's and the Baron's *Poems* will lie on the same Shelf of Oblivion... Byron not remembered at all except as a wicked Lord who from morbid and restless vanity pretended to be ten times more wicked than he was.' I hope you still bear your old grudges; I would hate to think of you recanting, for your opinions were always expressed so unconditionally that any malice was blunted.

Sadly only one of your letters to Hogg seems to have survived, but it's a good one, especially its conclusion when you suggested a 'small trial of skill'. I hope at some point here or in the next world I may have a chance to read the thirty-four odes which resulted, assuming you and the Shepherd have found the leisure and the inspiration to complete the project: *A Small Trial of Skill: Seventeen Odes Apiece* by Lord Byron and James Hogg, ed. Scott, Campbell, Baillie et al. (London: John Murray, n.d.)

→ For now I have been reading *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Harold must be one of the most negligible leading men in art: it's as if you were writing a part for yourself to act, realising as you did so that you had no interest in performing a scripted role but wanted simply to speak straight to camera. Again, the Parthenon sculptures, which we call the 'Elgin Marbles', are still in London, and the Greeks are still trying to recover them, thus far in vain – the British Museum is concerned that if they do give them back, there will be claims on much else besides, for such plunder has continued ever since, from Greece, Asia Minor, Egypt, Iraq. We are an acquisitive people.

Poets (some of them at least) in your day died too young. Had Burns been granted another 10 or 15 years you might have met him; and had you lived longer you might have written, say, a celebratory ode to Greek independence – an epitaph for Goethe – and one for Southey – epigrams on Wordsworth's appointment as Poet Laureate – the tragicomedy *1848* – a review of *Les Fleurs du Mal* – your *Table Talk with Dr Livingstone...*

I could go on reading you all day and indefinitely, such is the verve and charm of your writing, whether polished like the poems, or immediate like the correspondence. They have so much by and to and about you in this Archive – at least Hogg had the decency to lose a few of your letters. There has to be a casting off in order to move forwards, and I suppose one way of doing that is 'archiving' one's papers, putting them all into a big box and storing them safely for 'posterity' to discover, which means a researcher or librarian laboriously poring over them, some poor brain like mine vainly attempting to decipher the handwriting, and turning to the – when they are available – published versions which are edited and legible. And yet there is a delight and an intimacy in holding the original, returning the public to the private: the draft of a poem, or a letter from one person to another on a particular occasion, before the story was finished. I like that provisional quality, this text as one move in the course of a game still being played. Before the moment of checkmate. We who see the game in its complete form analyse and understand the patterns better than the players, who doubt, react, intuit, confide, act rashly or procrastinate. The archive allows us to look over Death's shoulder and catch a glimpse of the messy unresolved activity of a life, of the times before our existence, beyond our presence.

I'm sorry to interrupt your afterlife thus, though I expect you are used to and probably enjoy the continuing attention.

Yours sincerely,
Ken Cockburn

Discover more

Tessa Ransford OBE is the organiser of the Callum Macdonald Memorial Award, administered annually in May by NLS, which rewards the best Scottish talent in creating and publishing poetry pamphlets. Visit www.nls.uk/news/awards for more information about the award.

To see more of **Ken Cockburn's** Archive-inspired work and other learning resources, keep an eye on www.nls.uk/jma later in the year as these resources are developed.

See also: www.spl.org.uk/poets_a-z/cockburn.html. BBC Radio Four's programme about the Archive, *Buried Treasure – The John Murray Archive*, will be repeated for four Sundays, from 4 April at 11.05am.



An unwelcome visitor...

Rare Books Curator **Eoin Shaloo** uncovers the written response to the cholera epidemic that ravaged Scotland in the 19th century.

Cholera; a word to strike fear into the heart of any globe-trotter in the 21st century. The disease is all but vanquished from these shores today, but in the seething slums of 19th century urban Scotland, it was very much a reality.

The Library recently purchased 'The Visitor', a magazine which recorded the cholera epidemic that swept through Scotland in 1832. This is a surprisingly rare work – no other copies of it have been traced. It was published weekly from 4 February to 25 April 1832. Not exactly a cheerful read, it detailed the number of new cases, deaths and recoveries in Greenock, Paisley, Kirkintilloch and Glasgow. The worst of the outbreaks appeared to be in the west of Scotland but there was also news of the disease affecting Haddington, Musselburgh, Tranent and Edinburgh as well as Belfast, London and Newcastle.

Over 9,500 people died in Scotland including 3,000 in Glasgow alone. The infection arrived for the first time in Britain in 1831, probably on ships bringing imports from India. It spread rapidly in the growing industrial towns, where houses had been built quickly without any thought for sanitation or sewage disposal. Cholera first appeared in Haddington in late 1831, allegedly carried by cobblers from Newcastle walking along the Great North Road. There were further outbreaks in 1848, 1853 and 1866 and again the death toll was considerable.

The magazine contains practical information, including recipes for possible cures and symptoms to look out for. The publisher regarded cholera as an opportunity for people to repent for their sins and also noted the relatively large numbers suffering from intemperance who succumbed to the disease. Elsewhere in the Library's collections are numerous sermons on the epidemic including 'The plague is begun, or, God's warning voice to all classes in the cholera' published in Aberdeen and 'The fear of God's judgements improved: a sermon delivered at Kirkintilloch'. The popular literature of the time, such as broadsides and chapbooks, also dwelt on the subject. A Dunfermline chapbook published in 1832 includes 'Hints respecting cholera' alongside intriguingly titled works such as 'The unfortunate loves of a cabbage and a cauliflower' and 'The man o' th' leather'.

Cholera had a huge impact on daily life. Hawkers were unable to travel to the Highlands and weavers lost their jobs as there was no demand for their wares. 'The Visitor' also reports on 'cholera riots' in Glasgow, Paisley and Edinburgh. Surgeons were the particular target as they were suspected of 'burking' or murdering those who were ill. The notoriety of the Burke and Hare murders three years earlier was still in the public mind. As if all the cholera news was not grim enough, 'The Visitor' also found space for a 'miscellaneous' section detailing fires, murders, drownings and robberies. In the issue for 14 March there was even mention of an earthquake in Crieff!

This publication starkly communicates the fragility of human life at the time. It serves as a grave reminder of those now-forgotten dark corners of urban squalor that were prevalent in Scotland not so long ago. **nls**

Discover more

The Visitor

Comprising a detailed list of cholera lists, accidents, occurrences c. 1832.

↓ Shelf mark: ABS.1.206.060

The plague is begun, or, God's warning voice to all classes in the cholera, David Simpson, 1832.

↓ Shelfmark: ABS.2.92.27 (1)

The fear of God's judgements improved: a sermon delivered at Kirkintilloch, Andrew Marshall, 1832.

↓ Shelfmark: ABS.3.88.25(4)

The monthly scrap book, for February, 1832.
[Dunfermline chapbook]

↓ Shelfmark: L.C.2799(2)

Further reading

Cholera 1832: the social response to an epidemic, RJ Morris, 1976.

CHOLERA MORBUS.
ADVICE TO FAMILIES
FOR THE PREVENTION AND CURE
OF THIS FUL MALADY

Michael Hance, Director of the Scots Language Resource Centre, explains how the written legacy of Scotland's forgotten language connects with its healthy life today.

A guid future fir Scots tongue

Most people know that Scotland is a country with more than one language. In this sense it is not unusual. There are few European countries with only one language. Perhaps Iceland best fits the bill, but even there the picture of monolingual purity is complicated by the presence of English in business and culture, and by Danish, which is learned by the many young Icelanders who finish their education at universities and colleges in the former 'mother country'.

Here at home it still surprises many people to hear Scotland described as *multi-lingual*.

Most people are aware of the existence of Gaelic even if they don't actually know that much about it, and of course English dominates everywhere, not just Scotland. But what of Scots – the language which is becoming better known but which when mentioned can still raise a questioning eyebrow? After many years of official neglect Scots is at last receiving the support it is due. It is recognised in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Scottish Executive has promised to consider how best to sustain and fund it through the development of a national languages strategy.

A still from *Still Game*, courtesy of the BBC.



→ It is against this background that the Scots Language Centre has been launched. The Centre replaces the old Scots Language Resource Centre which for many years was located at the A K Bell Library in Perth. The new Centre still has an office there but rather than concentrating on the development and management of a physical collection, the Centre focuses on providing services online. We recognise that others are better equipped and better resourced in terms of collecting, cataloguing and curating and it would be silly for us to try to carry out tasks that they are already doing.

Instead the Centre acts mainly as an information broker gathering together material in or about Scots and re-presenting it in an accessible way to the rest of the world. One of our main aims is to talk to Scots speakers themselves. We are funded to do everything possible to raise awareness of the language and to encourage a sense of linguistic self-confidence and pride among speakers. Scots was dealt some very hard blows by the technological and social developments of the past. The advent of printing brought the English bible into Scottish homes, and in the 20th century the development of the broadcast media brought many Scots into daily contact with spoken English for the first time. At the Centre we are determined that the Scots language should not miss out on the opportunities afforded by the ongoing changes in information and communications technologies. Our website presents a living language and culture. Visitors can read and more importantly listen to the language in its various forms.

There is a great appetite for Scots. We know this not only because of the traffic our website generates, but also because of the popularity of books like Matthew Fitt's *The Eejits*, his recent Scots translation of Roald Dahl's *The Twits*, and of TV programmes like *Still Game* where local speech forms predominate.

Of course Scots hasn't just emerged from the ether. It is the language that has been spoken by the majority of people in this country for many hundreds of years. The National Library's

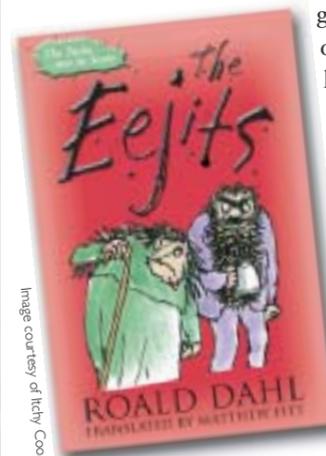


Image courtesy of Icthy Coo.

collections house many documents written in the language. In a recent initiative the Library has agreed to share some of these on the Scots Language Centre's web site. Along with the Library's staff we select a historic document to put online every month. So far the documents selected have included the Bannatyne Manuscript, an important volume of early Scottish poetry published in 1568 and 16th century surgeon Gilbert Skeyne's medical advice for plague sufferers. These documents show that Scots was used by all classes and to discuss every possible subject. Reading them you can almost hear the speech of the time, providing a thrilling connection to our linguistic antecedents.

NLS is not alone in making part of its collection accessible via the Centre's site. The Scottish Poetry Library is also showcasing work, both historic and contemporary. Further support comes from *The Herald* newspaper, which allows the Centre to reproduce its Scots word of the week feature, and from many other institutions and individuals who are keen to encourage a better understanding of the language and the culture that goes with it. The new sense of openness and enthusiasm for contact with the public at NLS is something we at the Centre have sought to replicate in our own undertakings. We hope that this new relationship will continue to bear fruit for both bodies and more importantly for the wider community.

After all Scots is all around us, its evidence can be found in the geography of our daily lives. You will see Kirkgates in every lowland town. There are glebes and braes, manses, bonnysides, howes and knowes. Listen too and you will hear it emerging unprompted from the mouths of Scots themselves. You'll hear about dwams and fashes, lang roads and cutty sarks, wee bauchles and auld hooses, dreich days, bonny bairns and mair nor them forbye. Isn't it right that more should be done to encourage a better understanding of the place this wonderful tongue has in our history and culture? **nls**

Discover more

For more information, take a keek at www.scotslanguage.com. To read the latest NLS document, visit www.scotslanguage.com/scots/scots_writing.

Scots glossary

Dwam: a kind of dream like, distracted state – teenagers are often in one!

Fash: (v) to be agitated, to worry

Lang: long

Cutty: short

Sark: shirt

Bauchle: a small, (sometimes) dumpy, untidy person

Auld hoose: old house

Dreich: overcast, dismal

Bonny: pretty, fine, beautiful

Mair: more

Nor: than

Forbye: besides, in addition

Digging up Darien

Nat Edwards braves killer bees and torrential rains to deliver dispatches from the uninhabitable site of Scotland's ill-fated colonial adventure, with an exclusive extract from his book, *Caledonia's Last Stand*.

On 2 November 1698 a small Scottish fleet landed on the Isthmus of Darien, Panama to create a colony and launch a new trading empire. Eighteen months later, the colony had seen the loss of ten ships, almost half of Scotland's available cash and the lives of two thousand souls. The failure of the Darien Scheme and ensuing fallout were key factors in shaping the 1707 Union of Scotland and England. The papers of the Company of Scotland, held by NLS, have continued to provide a remarkable document of both a truly national enterprise and a national disaster. However, they are just one part of the story, as a visit to the site of the colony proved.

Today, the last evidence of Caledonia is a jungle-covered knob of land measuring approximately three hectares. Fort St Andrew comprises a roughly circular, ragged promontory on the leeward side of the remote peninsula of Punta Escoces. It is low-lying, with no water supply and surrounded by swamp. The neck of the promontory is defended by a ditch and a series of bastions. A defensive channel cut by the colonists has long since silted. Halfway along the defences, the main entrance to the fort can still barely be discerned. At the tip of the fort, a few metres from the sea, is the site of a communal →

Main: Bill Paterson, in the role of his namesake William Paterson who oversaw the Scheme, from *Darien: Disaster in Paradise*, courtesy of the BBC.

Right: A selection of small finds from Punta Escoces. They include fragments of burnt timber that form the only surviving evidence of the Scots' dwellings and fragments of base metal that the Scots smelted to make ammunition.

oven, collapsed and overgrown. The centre of the fort is marked by a puddle of brackish water, a well dug by the fort's desperate defenders when colonial Spanish forces descended upon them.

The fort is covered by swamp and thickets, with no discernible trails. Along its shore, dead trees form perches for groups of pelicans and vultures, who watch newcomers with lazy interest. The dense, untended jungle within the fort is home to countless small birds, rodents and monkeys, so that the vegetation is constantly alive with rustles and a chorus of chatters, whistles and squeaks. Any human visitor to the fort enjoys the constant companionship of blood-sucking insects. Humanity is tolerated as a very occasional source of sustenance; any more permanent attempt at settlement is rapidly swallowed by the forest. On a contemporary map of the colony, the rubric concludes, 'Wood increases here Prodigiously, so that tho many scores of Acres were cleared, yet in a few Months after it was so overgrown as if nobody had been there.'

The fertility of Caledonia was a theme of many of the colonists' reports. Used to the seasonal growth of crops in Scotland, they were overwhelmed by the climate's anarchic disregard for the familiar rhythms of home. Their accounts were a mixture of wonder and bewilderment. Alongside the abundance of life, the Scots discovered a surfeit of rains, of which they described two sorts – one prolonged, 'strong and violent' and the other a series of two or three 'moderate and growing' showers in a day, accompanied by 'frequent Tornadoes and Gusts of Wind'.

The main purpose of our visit to Punta Escoces was to find some evidence of the hundreds of Scots who had died in the colony. After days of exploring the surrounding area we had returned to where we knew the Scots had made their last stand. The area was far too overgrown to make any effective exploration, so we decided to concentrate our efforts on clearing a reasonable amount of bush and then use what time we had left to investigate it. We were assisted by a team of local Kuna Indians from a nearby island – descendants of the same indigenous people who had welcomed the 17th century Scots as friends and allies.

As we hacked through the bush, we noticed that the usual noises of the jungle had become muffled. Nothing could be heard, save a low, droning buzz.

'Bees!' came the cry from John Blennerhasset, one of our party, 'Abejas! Abejas!'

I could see the bees' nest, about fifteen feet away. 'We need to get out of here quick,' John explained. 'They're killer bees; we need to find another way through.'

As fast as we could, we made a respectful retreat from the bees. As we neared the southern shore, clouds of almost invisible sandflies got into our eyes, noses and mouths and peppered us with bites. We made fires to try to drive them off but with little success. When the rain came at last, it was a relief.

For hours, finger-thick vertical rods of rain pinned us beneath a pathetic shelter of coconut palms. Then, when it seemed as if our mission to Punta Escoces would end with our waiting out the storm in a soggy huddle under a palm tree, the rain stopped. In an instant the clouds were gone. On some unspoken cue, the forest let out a triumphant roar as a million tiny mouths, throat-sacs and wing-casings celebrated the end of the rain. Tree frogs chirruped, buzzed and creaked. Further off, the unmistakable sound of howler monkeys. We set to work, making good progress in the newly cleaned air. →



Above: Dated 1699, but published some years later, Herman Moll's map of New Caledonia is a fairly accurate depiction of Punta Escoces.

Shelf mark: EMW.b.2.2



Once the Scots had retreated to Fort St Andrew before the approaching Spanish, ceding fresh water and high ground, the fort that the Scots had sacrificed so much to build became a trap. Their backs to the sea, the Scots had little choice but to make a final attempt to cling on to Caledonia as their food, medicine, water and ammunition ran out.

Carefully scraping away litter and soil with the tips of our machetes, we soon found the evidence of their settlement. We started to uncover the footprint of the Scots settlement within the fort, finding a number of concentrations of two and three inch long iron nails and fragments of black, shiny, burnt timber. These were the remains of the settlers' huts. Between them, we uncovered a raised pathway of crushed and broken coral fragments – a rudimentary road. Either side of this, we found more evidence of the Scots' battle to defend the fort. We found musket balls, apparently unfired – perhaps dropped and lost in panic. Ignoring the swarms of biting fire ants that were disturbed by our excavations, we found the buckles and strap fittings from soldiers' uniforms. Nearby, a concentration of pewter fragments that had been deliberately broken up and a small mound of coral fragments – perhaps the site of a shot foundry, where any scrap metal that the settlers could find was melted and recast as ammunition. Supplies running low, the Scots had literally been throwing everything they had against the Spanish.

The Darien papers in the National Library of Scotland are fascinating – but they are just one part of the story. It was here, on our hands and knees in the ant-infested dirt of the jungle; with the rain beginning to fall again; holding the last scraps of Scottish hopes of resistance in our hands that the story came to life. We reached the edge of the trail we had cleared and recognised a familiar area. 'We're getting near to the bees,' observed John. It was time to go back. **nls**



Left: Nat Edwards cuts his way through the dense vegetation to unearth some finds.

Below: A number of the metal finds we excavated at the site were remarkably well preserved, considering the moisture and acidity of the soil.



Discover more

Caledonia's Last Stand is published by Luath Press in April. www.luath.co.uk

Nat will be launching the book with a special illustrated talk on 9 May, see page 10 for more details.

The Library's Manuscript, Map and Rare Book collections all hold papers relating to the colony.

The Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies (Darien Company) found in our Manuscript collections include subscription books, financial records, lists of goods shipped to Darien and minute books and even a set of copper plates that the Company used to issue its own bank notes.

↓ Shelf mark: Adv.MSS.83.1.1-83.9.3

From the Rosebery Collection in our Rare Book collections comes the ballad *Trade's Release: or Courage to the Scotch-Indian-Company*, celebrating the Scots' dreams of a new trading empire. It can be found alongside other popular ballads and broadsides online in **The Word on the Street**, at www.nls.uk/broadsides.

↓ Shelf mark: Ry.III.a.10(083)

A defence of the Scots abdicating Darien: including an answer to the Defence of the Scots settlement there. Authore Britanno sed Dunensi. Darien deserter, Walter Herries' pamphlet was publicly condemned and ordered to be burned by the Edinburgh Hangman. Copies of Herries' pamphlet and several other contemporary printed accounts of Darien survive in the Rosebery Collection.

↓ Shelf mark: Ry.I.6.260

Herman Moll's map, *The Scots Settlement in America called New Caledonia. A.D. 1699 according to an original draught by H. Moll* is one of several late 17th and early 18th-century maps of the settlement held in the Library's map collections.

↓ Shelf mark: EMW.b.2.2

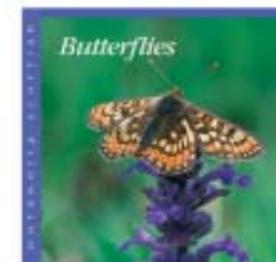
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Competition

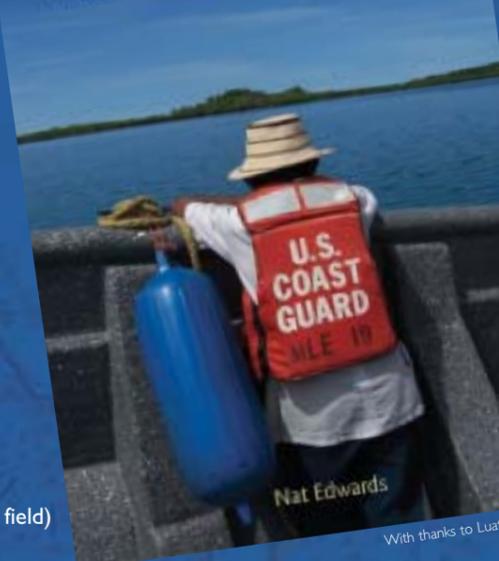
Win Caledonia's Last Stand

Nat Edwards' book embarks on an exciting and often dangerous quest to discover the real story behind the disastrous attempt at building a Scottish Empire in Panama's Isthmus of Darien. His narrative takes us on a journey that is thoughtful, sinister and hilariously funny by turns. **Three lucky readers** can stowaway with him on this remarkable voyage by answering this searching question:

What was the name of the only ship from the first Darien Expedition to make it home to Scotland?

Answers to: Competitions, Discover NLS, Marketing Services, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge Edinburgh EH1 1EW
Or by e-mail to: discover@nls.uk (please put competition in the subject field)

CALEDONIA'S
LAST STAND
in search of the last Scots of Darien



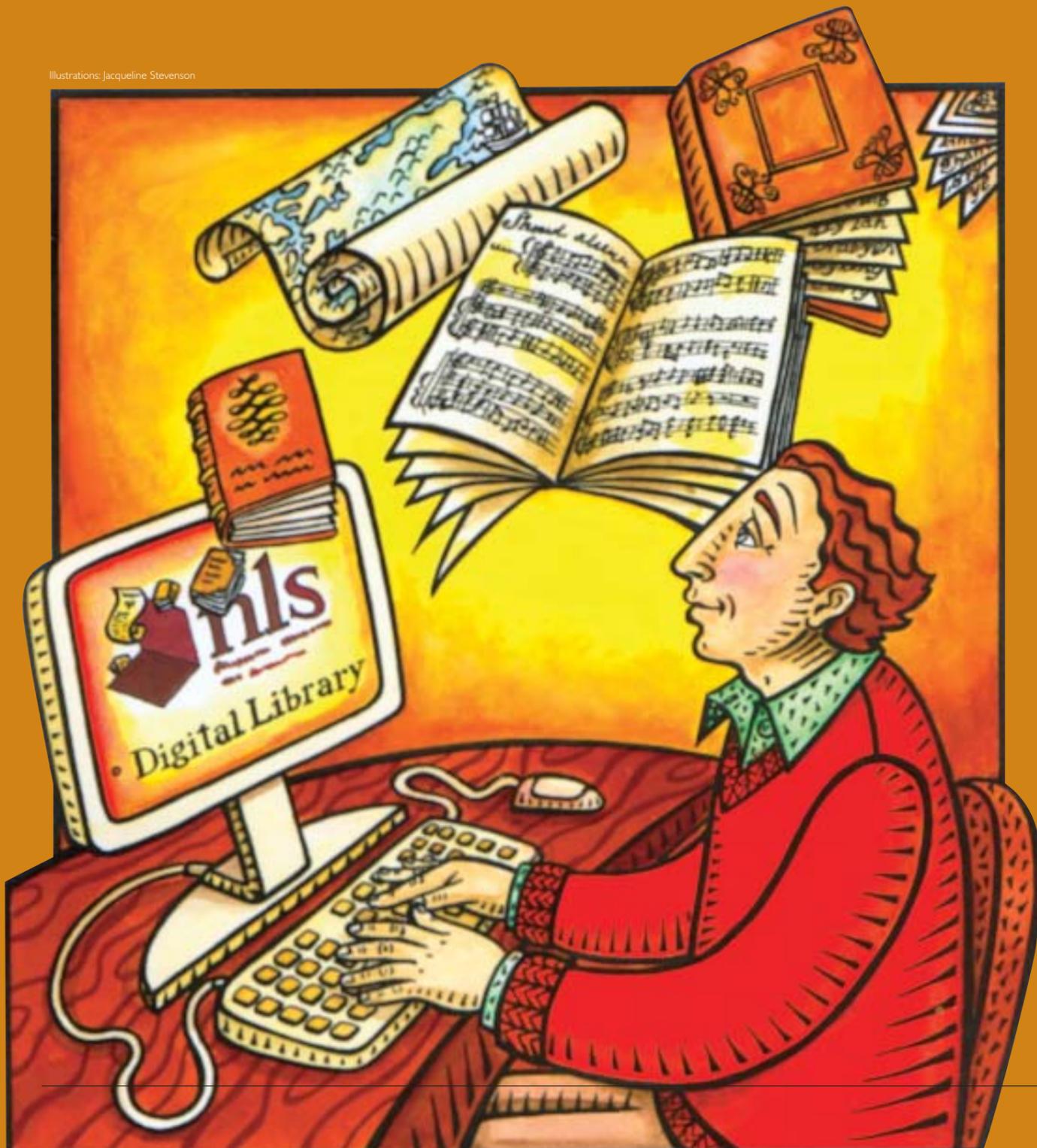
Nat Edwards

With thanks to Luath Press

Digital collections:

Paul Cunnea picks out some hidden gems lurking within our licensed digital collections, with the first of a series of articles highlighting the full range of these priceless resources.

Illustrations: Jacqueline Stevenson



The gold you can't hold

When people talk of 'priceless library treasures', they usually mean rare books, historic manuscripts and maps - tangible things that you can hold in your hands and marvel at their antiquity, craft or detail. This very Library houses thousands of such things and doubtless they will continue to inspire and impress researchers and visitors for generations to come. But just as you should never judge a book by its cover, you would be missing a trick or two should you judge a library collection by its book covers alone. There are vast resources of invaluable treasure that you won't find in the book stacks or behind display case glass, and they're closer than you might think.

The growth of digital technology gives us the opportunity to present treasures that just a decade ago would beckon researchers from across the country and the seven seas to view. These digital collections can now be delivered to your doorstep or desktop, in the comfort of your own home, public library, place of work or study. Our licensed digital collections are a veritable goldmine of resources that we pay for, so you don't have to.

The publishers behind the 'digital TARDIS'

Publishers worldwide have invested millions in digital technology in response to the threats and opportunities posed by the Internet and the digital age. In the last decade or so this has resulted in a vast array of digital content on the web. This covers the gamut, from huge and expensive online journal collections (one publisher lists over 21 million articles in their collections alone) offering access to the first issues of the earliest of scholarly titles, alongside freshly drafted scientific articles on Bird Flu to massive digital libraries carrying hundreds of thousands of titles from the early days of printing. Such collections have been sourced

from disparate collections around the world, and are brought to you in one place for the first time. Add to this the growing body of current titles available online, ranging from text books, literature and music to collections of major reference works, such as Oxford Reference, Xreferplus, and ever popular titles such as Who's Who and the Grove Dictionary of Music. To complete this digital treasure trove, specialist databases and online indexes such as Web of Science and Kompass provide pinpoint access to scientific, scholarly and business information.

The web as a car boot sale

So isn't all this information freely available on the web? Surely a quick Google search will faithfully deliver the full-text or data straight to your screen in seconds? The web indeed provides many rich seams of information and content freely available to all. There is a growing body of open access journal collections made available free of charge and without restriction through the academic community. Bodies such as NLS need to ensure that these resources are promoted and used, as well as ensuring that they are available in the future. Think of the web as car boot sale. You might find a bargain, but you might need to spend a lot of time wading through the junk to find it.

What's it worth?

Of course, most digital content that's worth something has a price-tag. As with any precious commodity, if someone can charge you for it, they will. Those publishers who have invested in their digital content are not about to give it away. But on the bright side, this is where libraries like NLS come in.

We are committed to bring you as many relevant and valued digital collections as we can. Currently we make over 80 licensed digital collections freely available to registered users, and we will highlight several different digital treasures in each subsequent issue of Discover NLS, starting with...

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online

The printed forefather of this resource, the Dictionary of National Biography (DNB) has been widely held as one of the premier biographical sources since it was first completed, in 1900, in all its 63-volume glory. The DNB covers important figures that shaped the history of the British Isles from 400 BC to the modern day. When the online version, the Oxford DNB (ODNB), was launched in 1994 it was revised to cover 50,000 biographies, with new entries added on a quarterly basis.

The ODNB provides a single, authoritative source for both internationally renowned and lesser-known figures from down the centuries. The content has been compiled by experts in their field (12,500 at the last count), specially commissioned for inclusion in the dictionary. It provides sophisticated search options that are not available on your standard search engine, as well as interactive services.

There is no denying that there are some very rich and important websites out there, but few can compete with the level of authority, sophistication and range of content that ODNB provides.

Early American Imprints

Early American Imprints (EAI) provides access to the full text of over 39,000 titles printed in North America between 1639 and 1800, many of which are only otherwise available overseas. You can search for and view the images of the original pages of virtually every work of early American publishing. Also known as Digital Evans (Charles Evans compiled the printed American Bibliography on which the collection is based), EAI has been hailed as a definitive resource for researching every aspect of 17th- and 18th-century America, covering books and broadsides, laws and maps, songs and speeches, and much more besides.

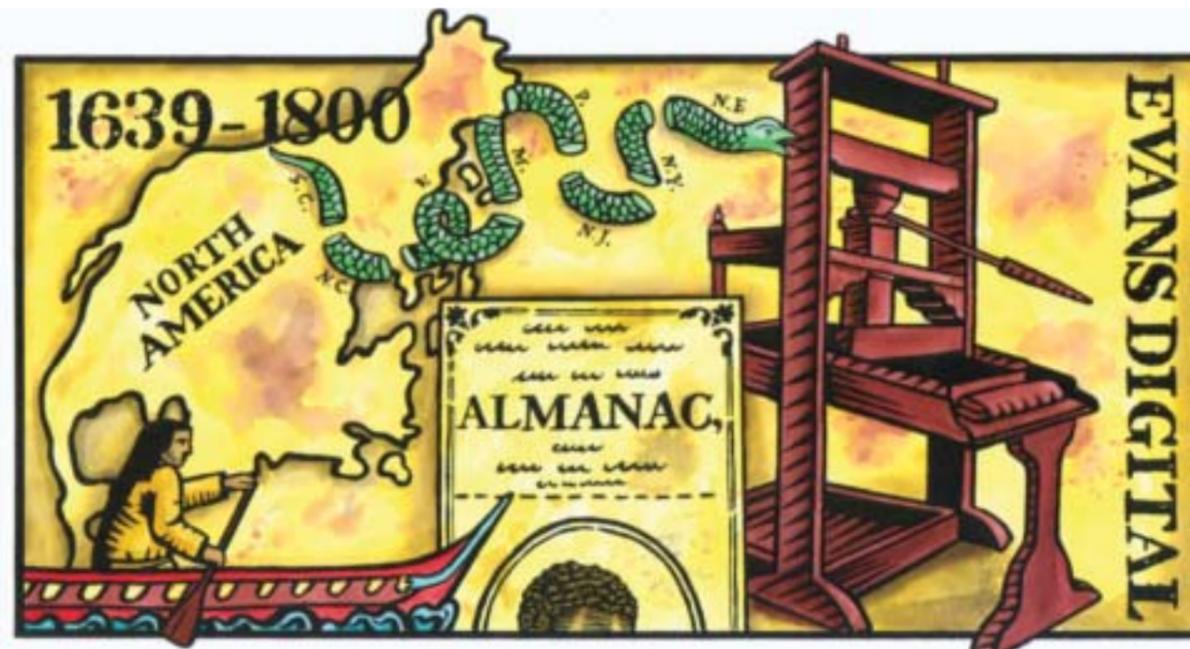
The collection includes a huge amount of material previously unavailable in the UK, including much Scottish content. The 39,000-odd titles amount to 2.3 million digital pages, all of which can be searched by keyword due to the optical character recognition technology used in creating the digital pages.

EAI complements similar digital collections that NLS has purchased, such as Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO). Between



the three of them, NLS is able to offer users access to over 300,000 digital titles spanning four centuries, which placed back to back would stretch from Dumfries to Galashiels.

Sophisticated search and navigation options abound: standard citations; full-text searching; searching via genre, subject, author, printer, publisher, bookseller, place of publication and date. The combined content of these three collections can be searched in a matter of minutes, and explored at leisure, as opposed to the years of research, detective work and travel around the world, which would have been required to uncover these treasures in the past.



XreferPlus

Not all of these digital treasures are historical. There are modern-day reference works geared to serve the needs of the life long learner or just the plain curious. Xreferplus provides access to over 100 up-to-date reference titles from the world's leading publishers, offering full-text searching and browsing across the one million entries and 5,000 images contained in them. Titles cover art, language, business, history, geography, music and literature, science, religion and biography. You can filter your search by individual or selected works, or just search them all.

One of the jewels in this particular digital crown is the ever popular Who's Who, the recognised information source on living people of influence and interest in all fields. The online edition contains the current Who's Who, plus the entire Who Was Who archive dating from 1897.

Such reference collections work particularly well in the digital environment, benefiting from easy updating and correction, cross-searching of multiple sources and titles, delivering simple access to the answers you need in seconds.

Now for the small print...

If detailing this embarrassment of riches has you salivating over your keyboard it's only right to balance it with some pragmatics.

Understandably, publishers need to protect their investment in these resources. This takes the form of a licence agreement, which governs not only what the publisher provides to the Library and its users, but also how the Library

can use the digital content, where it can be used, and by whom. NLS is committed to making these digital resources as widely available to our users as possible, and enabling users access to them, wherever they are in Scotland is a priority. Without national deals this is not always possible, but we continue to fight for agreements that will provide the widest possible access for the people of Scotland, without harming the publishers' commercial position.

Sign up for the digital jackpot

Many of our licensed resources are available for remote access – with more in the pipeline – although some will have specific conditions on use. You will need to register to use these resources either in the Library or remotely and we warmly invite you to do so. Great effort is being made to make our registration process much easier in the near future, but in the meantime please follow the links below.

The next time you waste frustrated hours on search engines hunting for a reliable reference for that obscure Scottish writer or long-forgotten local politician, or you put off that visit to a far-flung library to sift through stacks of books in the hope that you will chance across that vital piece of paper that will complete your research puzzle, consider those quiet, unassuming digital treasures waiting to be sprung from their unprepossessing desktop boxes. In the words of one academic researcher, 'These resources make my work a hundred times easier, the collections are so rich and easy to use ... I find it hard to think how I managed before'.

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Discover more

Direct links

For an overview of our digital collections see:
www.nls.uk/catalogues/online/er/index.html

Find those titles available from your own home at:
www.nls.uk/catalogues/online/er/index.html#remote.

To learn how to get a reader's ticket go to:
<http://www.nls.uk/info/readerstickets/index.html>

To register for remote access visit:
www.nls.uk/catalogues/online/er/remotel.html

New home for publishing figureheads

The Library received a welcome and unusual addition to the Oliver & Boyd archives in January, with the arrival of a pair of marble busts of the Edinburgh publishing firm's founders. The extensive Oliver & Boyd archive came to the Library as a long-term deposit in 1970, when the leading academic and educational publisher was absorbed by the Pearson Longman publishing empire. It has made an important contribution to the Library's international reputation as a centre for the study of publishing history and helped cement the case for acquiring the John Murray Archive.

International publishers Elsevier inherited the busts (by Peter Slater, 1838) while occupying the firm's former Edinburgh premises and kindly donated them to the Library after a recent office move. Messrs Oliver and Boyd now inhabit the North Reading Room, where they preside over readers using the manuscript collections.



From left to right: Laurence Hunter, senior commissioning editor at Elsevier, with his colleague Janice Urquhart, the last serving member of staff to have worked for Oliver & Boyd, and Dr Iain Gordon Brown, Principal Curator of Manuscripts.

Digital paper enlightens Delhi

Digital Library Manager Simon Bains and ICT Manager David Dinham spoke at the International Conference on Digital Libraries last December in New Delhi, India. The theme of the 2006 conference was Digital Libraries: Information Management for Global Access. As well as fostering strategic and academic collaboration between digital library services across the globe, the conference has an important remit to unite libraries from the developed world with those from the developing world. Scotland was also represented by Dennis Nicholson, Director of the Centre for Digital Library Research at University of Strathclyde. The paper, which described how NLS is responding to the numerous challenges of digital library development, from storage and preservation to marketing and access, was well received by 500 experts from nearly 30 countries at the conference. Copies of the paper are available on request from Simon at s.bains@nls.uk.

Call for entries: Bookbinding and Saltire Awards

The closing date for entries to the internationally regarded 2006 Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding Competition (ESBC) is 30 September, while the NLS Saltire Research Book of the Year closes on 7 September.

German Annette Friederich scooped the top bookbinding prize at ESBC for her binding of Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway*, while Scot Tom McEwan achieved a rare home win in the student category.

At the Saltire Society Literary Awards in November 2006, a Gaelic book won the award for Research Book of the Year for the first time. The NLS-sponsored award went to Michael Newton's *Dùthchas Nan Gàidheal Selected Essays of John MacInnes*.

Information for potential applicants of both awards can be found at www.nls.uk/news/awards.



Annette Friederich with her winning binding.

Lessons well learned

Staff from all Library departments enjoyed a raft of activities at the second Learning at Work Week in January. Learning activities on offer ranged from those with direct professional relevance such as working with the media, learning about the Trusted Digital Repository and putting on an exhibition to more diverse topics such as Scots language, grammar, fitness and wellbeing and environmental awareness. More than 20 guests from other organisations also attended the sessions.

Edinburgh libraries offer Passport to knowledge

NLS will be participating in the Edinburgh Libraries Passport scheme. Launched by Edinburgh Library and Information Services Association (ELISA) on 16 March, the scheme will see NLS, along with university and college libraries, specialist libraries and all 26 of the city's public libraries working together to make it easier for information seekers to find what they need. When the home library cannot help with a query, an Edinburgh Libraries Passport can be issued and the door is opened to a vast range of high quality resources and information for free, making it easier than ever for customers to get the most from the reference collections in their area.

Customer charter launched

The Library is pleased to announce the launch of its first customer charter. The charter sets out the commitments we make to our customers and the standard of service we aim to offer. It has been informed by the results of our 'mystery shopping' programme, where ordinary members of the public test our services incognito. The results of these visits have been very encouraging so far, with an average of over 90 per cent satisfaction reported. To request a copy of the charter, please contact enquiries@nls.uk or call Head of Reference Services, Louise McCarron, on 0131 623 3825.

Up for the Cup

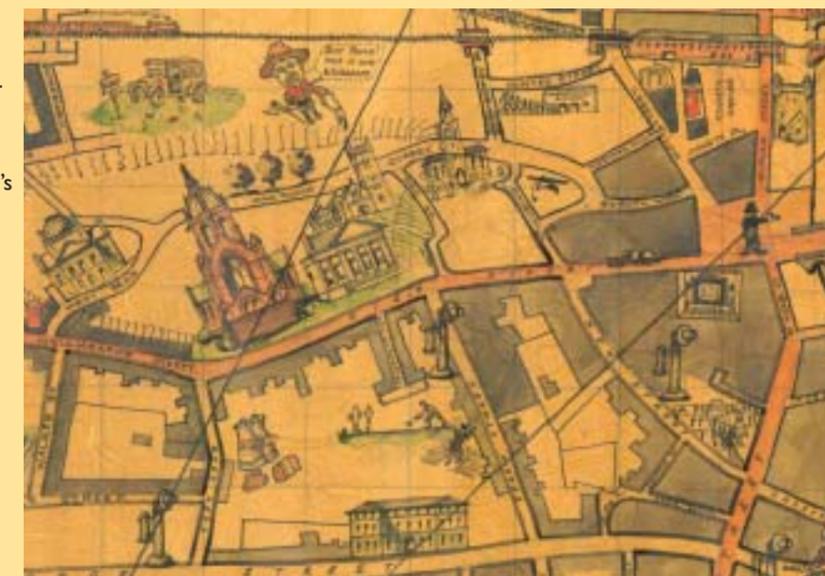
NLS will host the first ever Copyright Cup in Edinburgh this June. The international football tournament features four of the British Isles' six legal deposit libraries. Teams from the National Library of Wales and the libraries of Trinity College Dublin and Cambridge University will come to Edinburgh for the tournament, held at Edinburgh University's Peffermill playing fields (the Library's adopted home ground) over the weekend of 2-3 June. This will mark the second meeting of copyright libraries after NLS FC made their international debut in Dublin last July.

Iain Maciver (1943-2007)

With sadness, we said farewell to Iain Maciver, who passed away on 5 March 2007. Iain was born in November 1943 and grew up in Stornoway. After achieving a first-class honours degree in History at Aberdeen University, he moved to Edinburgh to undertake research into the Great Disruption in the Scottish church of 1843, which earned him an M.Litt. Iain joined the staff of the NLS Manuscripts Department in 1968 and spent the rest of his career here, ultimately becoming head of Division in 1998. He retired in March 2004. As a scholar, a colleague and a friend, he will be missed by staff and readers alike.

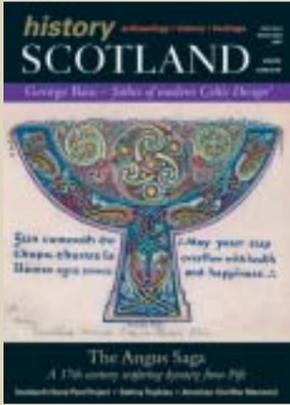
Brownie points for Paisley scout map

A unique pictorial plan of Paisley has been reproduced to celebrate the centenary of the Scouts, thanks to a collaboration between NLS and Paisley Local Studies Library. The Library helped scan this colourful and unique plan of Paisley from 1931, originally compiled for the now defunct Orr Square Church Scout Group in Paisley by an unknown author. The plan includes carefully drawn illustrations and caricatures of the town - including sporting pastimes, churches, hospitals, mills, and other landmarks - forming a colourful snapshot of the town's social and economic life.



The plan will go on display at 'A Century Of Scouting', an exhibition in Paisley Museum and Art Galleries running from Friday 6 April until Sunday 6 May. It will remain on permanent display in Paisley Local Studies Library. It can also be viewed online at: www.nls.uk/maps/early/towns.cfm?id=2258

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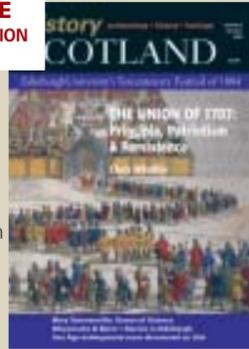
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Competition

Find your way around Scotland's first atlas to win it!

Joan Blaeu's Atlas of Scotland, published in 1654, was the first atlas of Scotland. In December 2006 publishers Birlinn worked in association with NLS to publish a sumptuous, new limited edition of the book worth £100, faithfully reproducing all 48 of the original hand-coloured maps. If you think you can work out which map this detail is taken from, you stand a chance to win a copy, available to the **first correct entrant**. And those resourceful enough to consult the digitised version of the atlas on our website will certainly improve their chances!



Answers to: Competitions, Discover NLS, Marketing Services, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge Edinburgh EH1 1EW
Or by e-mail to: discover@nls.uk (please put competition in the subject field)

The Library serves an increasingly wide variety of customers. Each issue we speak to an individual involved with NLS and find out what it means to team.

Kim Proven

Kim Proven is Business Leader for Dent-O-Care Ltd, a leading supplier and distributor of oral hygiene products. She shares her experiences of using SCOTBIS, the Library's business information service.

Q: How did you first discover NLS?

A: Around ten years ago I came across the business library when it was still based in the Causewayside building. I think I found it through searching online. At that time I worked for WL Gore Associates, famous for manufacturing GORE-TEX® products. My job was to investigate the oral hygiene market and launch their new dental floss brand. It came as a huge relief to find a local service that supported my needs.

Q: What type of research are you involved with?

A: These days I look after business development for Dent-O-Care. We are a small company, selling upwards of 800 oral hygiene and pharmaceutical products to the dental trade and patients direct. We are also exclusive distributors of a number of new international brands. With little funding to support these brands, our challenge is to research and launch new products on a shoe string! My work involves gathering all sorts of information, covering everything from competitor research on existing product applications and market share, to clinical study reports, what's new in tooth whitening, interdental brush designs and mouthwashes that contain chlorhexidine.

Q: How do you use NLS today?

A: Although I have visited the Library on a few occasions, I tend to use SCOTBIS remotely, requesting information by 'phone or email. The information I get from NLS is typically a mixture of the very specific – competitors sales figures, features and benefits of particular products - and more general sector news and updates. It's not uncommon for me to make a specific enquiry



and not only have that answered but also to receive all manner of very useful additional information. The remote service works perfectly for my purposes. The responses to my queries are always excellent, both in terms of quality and speed.

Q: What is the value of using NLS?

A: The value for me is two-fold. Firstly the sheer range of resources - the wealth of reports, scientific journals and specialist websites - at the Library's disposal is invaluable. Most of all though, it is the expertise of the staff that makes a difference. Their knowledge of such a vast array of information sources, coupled with their superior search skills, is worth its weight in gold! **nls**

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Your NLS?

If you would like to be featured in MyNLS, please contact Julian Stone on j.stone@nls.uk or call **0131 623 3764**.