

discover

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

ISSUE 6  
WINTER 2007

nls



**Thomas  
Telford**

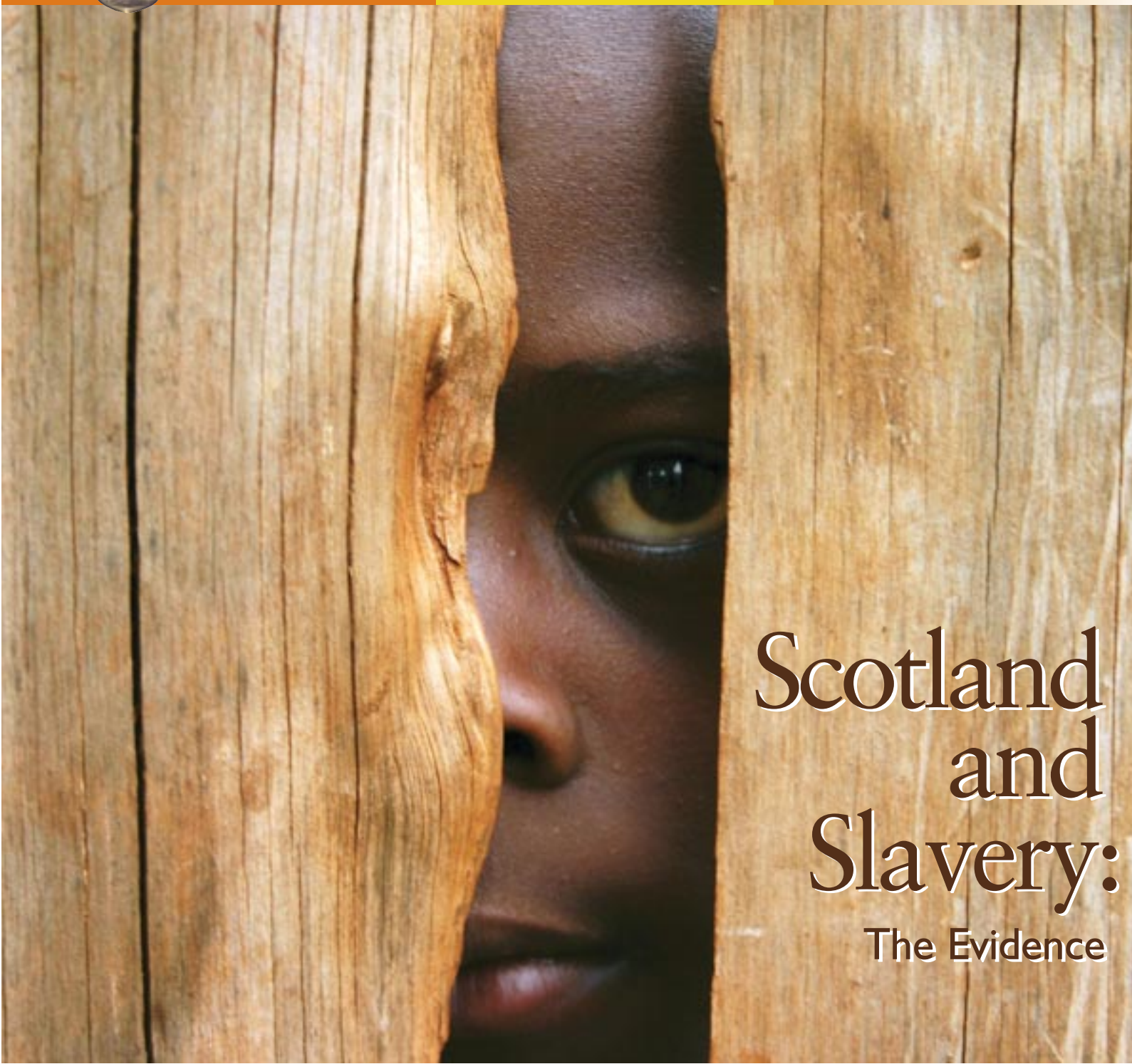
**Father of modern  
engineering**

**French  
revelation**

**Following Stevenson's  
footsteps**

**Byron  
writes to reply**

**A bard's  
Aberdeen**



**Scotland  
and  
Slavery:  
The Evidence**

## Foreword



Anniversary celebrations provide the focus for the two lead articles in this issue. The life, work and influence of civil engineer Thomas Telford is celebrated by a collaborative exhibition which opened at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery earlier this month, 250 years after his birth. The collaborative work extends to the articles in the magazine, with pieces from NLS and NGS curators exploring Telford's achievements and the inspiration others drew from him. In the wake of the publicity surrounding this year's 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery, Eric Graham reminds us of the involvement of Scots on both sides of the slavery debate.

Our literature collections continue to inspire research and creative responses. Aberdeen writer Diane Morgan dons the mask of Byron this issue and fills us in on the poet's affinity with the 'Granite City', while the ghost of Robert Louis

Stevenson also looms large, as Janice Galloway reflects on her experiences as previous recipient of the RLS Fellowship.

The works of these literary heavyweights rub shoulders in the Library's stacks with those less famous. Isobel Mackenzie's *Caberfeigh: A Magazine of Polite Literature* is an innovative example of female private press publishing in the Victorian era, while women's literature also features in our regular spotlight on the Library's growing digital resources. Finally, the grand scale on which NLS and other major libraries are digitising their large printed collections is touched on by the first in a two part series of articles concerned with mass digitisation.



Julian Stone  
Editor

## Contributors in this issue



**Dr Iain Gordon Brown** is Principal Curator in the Manuscript Collections Division, where he is chiefly concerned with acquisitions. He is actively involved in the field of architectural history in which he has published extensively, and where his work has been recognised by fellowships of the Society of Antiquaries of London and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

**Diane Morgan** has never dropped out of university, stacked supermarket shelves nor been a bus conductor. Though lacking such mandatory criteria for authorship she has contrived to write seven books on Aberdeen. The eighth, *Lost Aberdeen: The Outskirts*, is coming shortly from Birlinn. Uniquely, she has twice received the Personal Award of Aberdeen Civic Society for her work on the heritage and environment. Current projects include a study of panoramic art and redesigning her library.



**Dr Eric Graham** is a graduate of Strathclyde and Exeter Universities where he studied Scottish and Maritime History. He is currently an Honorary Post Doctoral Research Fellow of the Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh. He is the author of *A Maritime History of Scotland (1650-1790)*, *Seawolves: Pirates & the Scots* and *Clyde Built: Blockade Runners of the American Civil War*.

**Imogen Gibbon** is a Senior Curator at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, where she has worked for the last five and a half years. She is responsible for the Reference Section, an archive detailing portraits of and by Scots held in public and private collections outwith the National Galleries of Scotland. She has co-curated the joint exhibition **Telford: Father of Modern Engineering** with NLS Senior Manuscript Curator Sheila Mackenzie.



**Janice Galloway** is the author of seven books of prose, prose-poetry and poems. Her first novel, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*, now widely regarded as a Scottish contemporary classic, was published in 1990. Her most recent book, *Rosengarten* (with sculptor Anne Bevan) explored medical implements used in child birth and is now on permanent exhibition at the Hunterian Art Gallery. She is currently finishing a new novel, started at her RLS Fellowship in Grez-sur-Loing.



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### FEATURES

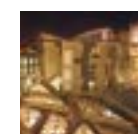
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### Cover Image:

(c) Kieran Beamish 2007.  
[www.LTScotland.org.uk/abolition](http://www.LTScotland.org.uk/abolition)



### 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.



## Royal visitor takes in tea, tigers and treasures

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh visited NLS on 5 July to open the Library's summer exhibition, **Tea and Tigers: Stories of Scotland and South Asia**. The exhibition focused on the role of Scots in India, before, during and after the British Empire, a subject of great interest to Prince Philip, as Patron of the Edinburgh Indian Association, which was one of the exhibition's key partners. The Prince was also given a full tour of the John Murray Archive exhibition and enjoyed a specially organised display of treasures from our collections of rare books, manuscripts and maps, before signing the visitors' book. Prince Philip had previously visited the Library when Her Majesty The Queen formally opened the Library's George IV Bridge building in July 1956.



Jan Usher, Head of Official Publications at NLS, gives The Duke of Edinburgh a tour of the exhibition.

## Award nominations

The Library has been short-listed for two more awards this year. NLS will be competing, alongside organisations in the private, public and agency sectors, in two categories at the prestigious Chartered Institute of Public Relations Pride Awards for Scotland, held in Glasgow this November. Our nominations are for Outstanding In-house PR Team and for Best Publication, for the *NLS 2005 – 2006 Annual Review*. The winners will be announced on Friday 16 November.

## Home and dry

Thousands of collection items have been saved from damage after a flood at the Library's George IV Bridge building. The flood, which was caused by accidental damage to a sprinkler pipe during renovation work, occurred in the early hours of 10 September. Staff worked through the night, with assistance from Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure that damage was minimised and services could return to normal as swiftly as possible.

The majority of the books affected escaped with only superficial humidity or very slight water damage, with many protected by specially designed conservation boxes which encase the items and bore the brunt of any water contact. Nearly all items concerned have now been dried out and returned to the shelves, with only five requiring special conservation treatment.

Cate Newton, Director of Collection Development praised staff and colleagues from other organisations for their help: 'We are extremely grateful to the many people who responded so swiftly and calmly to the incident,' she said. 'And the hard work and professionalism of collection and conservation staff year-round was instrumental in keeping damage to an absolute minimum.'

## Pilot service makes searching a synch

A new search service that allows web users to search dozens of databases, thousands of full-text resources and millions of records with a single click is being piloted at NLS. The Library offers access to some 50 online resources. These include online databases, catalogues and indexes, digital reference works such as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and *Who's Who*, collections of hundreds of key reference titles and full-text journals such as the *Environmental Policy Index*, and the digitised texts of thousands of early published works and manuscripts, such as Early English Books Online. This service makes it possible for customers to search all of these resources simultaneously, along with the NLS catalogue, other libraries' catalogues such as the Library of Congress and even more general web resources such as the photo-sharing website, **flickr.com**.

The trial service will be evaluated over the next six months and we welcome all feedback from users who have tried it. It is currently available on computers in the reading rooms but there are plans to make it available remotely soon.

**Try it now and tell us what you think –**  
**[www.nls.uk/trialsearch](http://www.nls.uk/trialsearch)**

## Family history resources go live

A new section of the website to help people research their Scottish family history has been put online. The section of the NLS website has been significantly expanded with 20 additional pages of useful information and provides an easy to follow resource for anyone new to genealogy. The section explains a range of services for researching your family tree, including the use of emigration and passenger lists, the census, newspapers, films, gravestone inscriptions and valuation and voters' rolls, as well as other resources available at NLS. It also provides helpful links through to the websites of the other main



organisations for family history in Scotland: the General Register Office for Scotland and the National Archives of Scotland. To learn more please go to **[www.nls.uk/family-history](http://www.nls.uk/family-history)**.

Family portrait from a photo album. Taken around 1870 by Robert Gibson Rettie of Kirkcaldy.

## Independence in focus at book festival

Popular broadcaster, political pundit and writer Andrew Marr made an inspiring appearance at the Donald Dewar Memorial Lecture in August, sponsored annually by NLS at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. Marr delivered a thought-provoking talk on Scotland's political future in the early days of its first nationalist government, to a packed auditorium of over 500 people. Marr argued that Scotland's political future should not always be viewed purely in financial terms and also touched on climate change and terrorism in his hour-long unscripted talk. The session was chaired by political journalist Iain Macwhirter, an appropriate choice as Macwhirter gave Marr his first break in broadcast journalism some twenty years earlier. Both speakers stayed to answer questions from the audience, which included politicians, journalists and environmentalists, and met with guests at a lively reception hosted by the Library later that evening.



## Licence to print opens celebrations

The earliest evidence of printing in Scotland went on display at the National Archives of Scotland (NAS) last month. The original royal licence went on show in September, to mark the start of events commemorating the 500th anniversary of printing in Scotland.

In 1508, King James IV of Scotland issued the first licence for printing in Scotland. It was granted to Walter Chepman, an Edinburgh merchant, and his business partner, a bookseller named Andrew Myllar. Their first book, John Lydgate's popular poem 'The Complaint of the Black Knight' was printed in Edinburgh's Cowgate on 4 April 1508. NLS holds the only known copy of the book, which will form the centrepiece of a major exhibition at NLS in summer 2008.

A wide range of activities are planned by NLS, NAS, the Scottish Print Employers Federation, the Scottish Printing Archival Trust and others, from this autumn onwards and throughout 2008. To keep up to date with the latest news or to find out how you can take part, visit **[www.500yearsofprinting.org](http://www.500yearsofprinting.org)**.



Senior Rare Books Curator Helen Vincent with an early printed volume.



## International business database launched at NLS

SCOTBIS, the Library's business information service, launches a major global business database at a special event at our Causewayside building. The event will be hosted by Alastair Balfour, former editor of Scottish Business Insider, on Thursday 25 October. Dun & Bradstreet's Global Reference Solution (GRS) is the largest company database of its kind in the world, with 80 million records. The database is available exclusively in Scotland from SCOTBIS, while NLS is also the first library in the UK to make it available remotely to customers on their home or work computers.

To register for the free event, please contact Shona Thomson on [shona.thomson@nls.uk](mailto:shona.thomson@nls.uk), to learn more about GRS please contact SCOTBIS on [enquiries@scotbis.com](mailto:enquiries@scotbis.com) or call 0131 225 8488.



## Still time to give us your views on race equality

### Have your say

NLS will publish a Race Equality Scheme online on 30 November, which will set out our policy on race equality and how it will be monitored. To help us with this, we would like you to give us your views on any aspect of our services, good or bad, which may affect how we treat people of different ethnic backgrounds. If you have any thoughts on this, we would like to hear from you. To give us your feedback, please complete a very short web questionnaire at <http://www.nls.uk/about/equalities/survey.html>.

If you're not online, please request a paper copy from **Paul Hamblen** in Enquiries and Reference Services, on 0131 623 3820.

## Pamphlet poses cultural questions

The Scottish Storytelling Centre (SSC) has published the first in a series of pamphlets exploring the future of education, ideas and creativity in Scotland. SSC director Donald Smith's 'chapbook' *Truth and Value: Continuing Enlightenment in Scotland*, takes in the recently-launched Curriculum for Excellence, philosophy and debate on cultural policy. Poet and Callum Macdonald Memorial Award organiser Tessa Ransford OBE is writing the second in the series, entitled, *Truth and Beauty*.

## NLS in Perth residency

The National Library took up a three-day residency in Perth's AK Bell Library in early September, as part of its programme of free road shows across Scotland. Curators from rare book, manuscript and modern collection departments displayed selections of many unique items from their collections. Items of particular interest to the people of Perth were chosen, including material relating to the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles and an early book of 'household management', from 1766 written by a Perth woman, Hannah Robertson. Staff met the public and answered enquiries at a dedicated enquiry point, while a series of talks were given on topics such as family history, military maps and making the most of digitised collections of rare books. Four workshops were also held with Perth library staff to promote awareness of NLS services. The event culminated with a special film show of bygone Perth, courtesy of the Scottish Screen Archive. Commenting on the event's success, Customer Services Director Gordon Hunt said, 'This has been a wonderful opportunity to promote our services to library users in Perth. The invitation from the staff here is evidence of the growing profile of NLS throughout Scottish libraries and we hope this will be the start of a long and fruitful relationship.'



Senior Rare Books Curator Dr Joseph Marshall mans the NLS stand in Perth's AK Bell Library.

## It's amazing how many destinations you can travel to from Scotland.



Scottish & Newcastle is the one of the world's largest brewers with beer brands stretching across continents. We are also the world's largest cider producer.

You may know us for famous brands like **John Smith's**, **Foster's**, **Kronenbourg** and **Strongbow** which make us No.1 in the UK and France but our brands have a global reach as well.

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These partnerships also see us in exciting new markets like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as the Ukraine, Belarus, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

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Famous brands. Local accent.



Scottish & Newcastle are delighted to support the Rebus20 Exhibition at the National Library of Scotland.



Sheila Mackenzie (Senior Manuscripts Curator at NLS) and Imogen Gibbon (Senior Curator at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery) pay tribute to the father of modern engineering.

# Thomas Telford:

## A lifetime of monumental achievement

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest civil engineers of all time: Thomas Telford (1757-1834). The son of a Dumfriesshire shepherd, Telford, through his own efforts and determination, became the leading civil engineer in the world. He gained an international reputation for works such as the Menai Suspension Bridge, the longest span bridge in the world at the time, and the Caledonian Canal. He also opened up the Highlands with a network of roads, bridges, harbours, churches and canal schemes, 'advancing the country at least a century'. Throughout his career, Telford employed various elements and working

practices which became the foundation for a newly identified profession. Civil engineering is defined by the Institution of Civil Engineers as: 'A great art, on which the wealth and well-being of the whole of society depends. Its essential feature, as distinct from science and the arts, is the exercise of imagination to fashion the products, processes and people needed to create a sustainable physical and natural built environment. It requires a broad understanding of scientific principles, knowledge of materials and the art of analysis and synthesis. It also requires research, teamworking, leadership and business skills.' →

On leaving school at 14, Telford was apprenticed to a stonemason and learnt his trade 'raising rough walls and farm enclosures, as well as erecting bridges across rivers'. The first significant structure he worked on was Langholm Bridge. Towards the end of his life, his correspondence reveals how important this period of apprenticeship was to his future career: 'this is the true way of acquiring practical Skill, a thorough knowledge of Materials to be employed, and altho' last, not least, a perfect knowledge of the habits and disposition of Workmen.' Between 1780 and 1782, Telford worked in Edinburgh as a mason, possibly in the New Town, and after this in pursuit of even greater opportunities, Telford travelled to London and found work on Somerset House. Even at this early stage of his career, he was showing great confidence, writing to his childhood friend Andrew Little he remarked, 'I am laying schemes of a pretty extensive kind', and revealed that he and a colleague were at the stage where 'there is nothing done in Stone or Marble that we cannot do in the completest manner. [sic]' After a spell as Superintendent at Portsmouth Dockyard, he worked on several architectural commissions in Shrewsbury before becoming County Surveyor of Shropshire. It was at this point that his career in civil engineering formally began with his appointment in 1793 as 'General Agent, Surveyor, Engineer, Architect and Overlooker' of the Ellesmere Canal, a project which was intended to join the rivers Mersey, Dee and Severn.

In 1810, Telford was appointed to survey and report on the main route between London and Dublin - the Holyhead Road. With the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland in 1801, an improved road was required in order for Irish Members of Parliament to travel between the two cities; part of the scheme was to be a crossing over the Menai Straits, between mainland Wales and Anglesey. A passageway across the Straits had been suggested some years before, as passengers and goods crossed the narrow, treacherous waters in small sailing ferries and cattle were made to swim across. Telford's solution was to build a suspension bridge, for which he carried out rigorous experimental practice and model testing. Samuel Smiles in his *Life of Thomas Telford* details how Telford 'most carefully tested every part by repeated experiment, and so conclusively proved the sufficiency of the iron chains to bear the immense weight they would have to support...that he was thoroughly convinced as to the soundness of his principles of construction.'

Completed in 1826, the Menai Bridge was the world's first great suspension bridge and opened up a new era in bridge design,

establishing the suspension bridge as the means of achieving the longest spans and encouraging the development of theoretical investigations into suspension bridge calculations. These experiments influenced the adoption of greater and consequently, more efficient depths of curvature and safe stresses in suspension bridge chains. This is exemplified today at the Akashi Straits Bridge in Japan, which has a main span of almost two kilometres.

The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, completed in 1805 and arguably Telford's most outstanding structure, carries the Ellesmere Canal over the River Dee. This 'waterway in the sky' required a rigorous knowledge of materials in order to stand 126 feet high at its centre and boast 18 stone piers carrying a cast iron trough across a span of over 1000 feet. Sir Walter Scott described it as the most impressive work of art he had ever seen, and it is a measure of Telford's engineering skills that the aqueduct stands more or less today as it did 202 years ago, remaining the largest aqueduct in Britain. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and its canal, now known as the Llangollen Canal, will be the UK's nomination for a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008.

Perhaps Telford's greatest contribution as a civil engineer was the work he carried out in his native Scotland, particularly in the Highlands. Emigration from the area had reached unprecedented levels, partly due to changes in agriculture, poor communication and unemployment. In 1801 Telford was asked to survey the area with a view to improving the communications in the region. In his role as engineer to the Commissioners of Highland Roads and Bridges, he was responsible for the building or repairing of nearly 1200 miles of roads and over 1000 bridges. This transportation network was further enhanced by his work on many Scottish harbours, including Aberdeen and Dundee. →



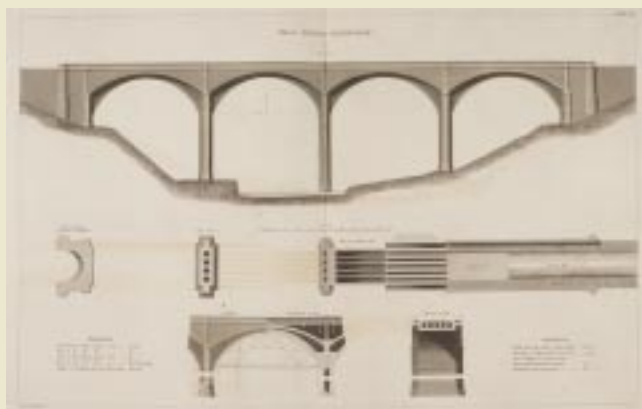
Opposite: Thomas Telford, c.1812, Sir Henry Raeburn, National Museums Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery.

Below: Menai Suspension Bridge, Wales, c.1922-1947, Norman Wilkinson NRM/Science and Society Picture Library.



As part of these Highland works, Telford was also responsible for constructing the Caledonian Canal along the Great Glen from Inverness in the north-east to Corpach near Fort William in the south-west. The idea of the canal was not new; it had long been recognised that a route that removed the need for shipping vessels to pass through the treacherous Pentland Firth would be advantageous. Telford reported that 'the line is very direct, and I have observed no serious obstacles' but in fact, the building of the Caledonian Canal was to prove to be one of his greatest challenges. Telford, at this time, was involved in many projects throughout the British Isles and was only able to visit Scotland occasionally but by appointing trusted resident engineers and contractors, many of whom had worked with him previously, the canal was opened in 1822. Unfortunately, by the time the canal was finished, it had become largely redundant, it was too shallow to accommodate the larger sailing vessels and steam ships were better placed to cope with the perilous seas. Nowadays, the canal is used by leisure and fishing boats and is a tourist attraction.

Telford's contribution to civil engineering went beyond his physical legacy. Having gained much of his knowledge by reading European architectural and engineering textbooks, he contributed to the Edinburgh Encyclopaedia with articles entitled: 'Bridge' (1812), 'Civil Architecture' (1813) and 'Navigation Inland' (1821).



His thirst for knowledge continued throughout his life and in 1833, a year before his death, he recorded in his diary that he was 'at home all day read Chemistry Books'. In 1820, Telford was invited to be the first President of the Institution of Civil Engineers. By this time he had become 'universally known' in the profession, and his colleagues realised that his presence at the helm of this newly instigated professional body had the potential to 'ensure a great and lasting benefit to the profession and Country at large'.

Britain's Industrial Revolution is unimaginable without Telford's dramatic intervention in the natural and built environment and his many structures still have a vital presence in Britain's towns and countryside today. Telford's contribution to civil engineering was without precedent and he helped shape civil engineering into the vision of 'a great art, on which the wealth and well-being of the whole of society depends.' **nls**

#### Discover more

MS.9157

Diary of Thomas Telford, 1833-4

MSS.19969-19978

Collection of papers relating to Telford's professional and personal life including material concerning his autobiography.

Acc.11648

Collection of papers of Thomas Telford relating to Greenock harbour.

I.21.a

Life of Thomas Telford, civil engineer / written by himself, edited by John Rockman, 1838.

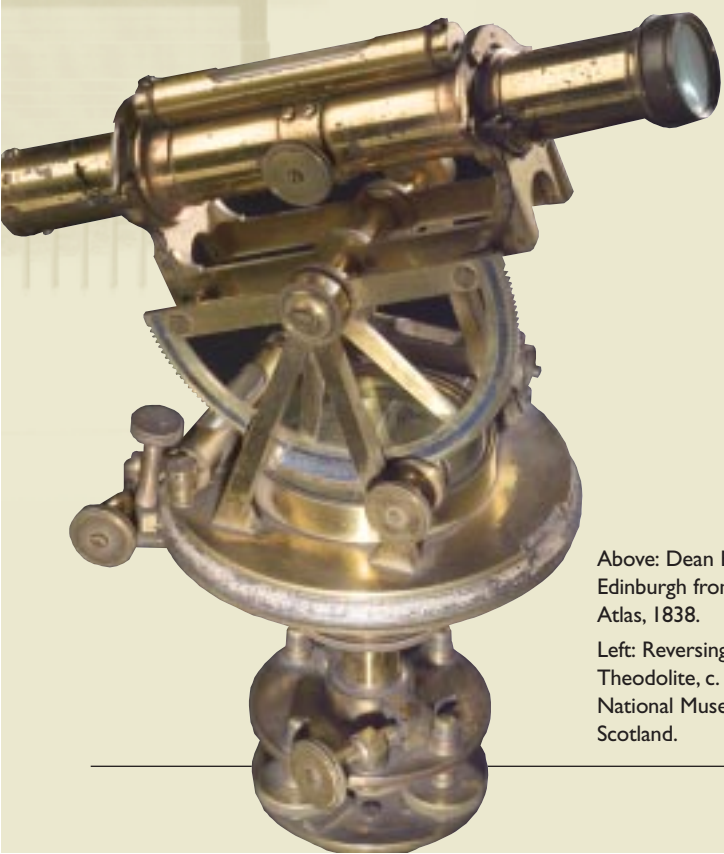
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Atlas to the life of Thomas Telford, civil engineer, containing eighty-three copper plates, illustrative of his professional labours.

The collaborative exhibition **Telford: Father of Modern Engineering** is on at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery until Sunday 25 November. Tickets are £6 (£4 concessions). For opening times and more information, visit [www.nationalgalleries.org](http://www.nationalgalleries.org).

Above: Dean Bridge Edinburgh from Telford Atlas, 1838.

Left: Reversing Theodolite, c.1820, National Museums Scotland.



Principal Manuscripts Curator, **Dr Iain Gordon Brown**, outlines two interesting Telford manuscript acquisitions, one made by design, the other by happenstance.

## The 'colossus of roads' and the romance of the steam-driven dredge



Our collections have long been rich in material relating to the history of civil engineering in Scotland and the work of Scottish civil engineers worldwide. Chief among these holdings is the extensive archive of the Stevenson family, notable especially as lighthouse builders - a profession into which their most illustrious member, Robert Louis, did not follow. The papers of the two John Rennie engineers (father and son) are in the Library, as is a major part of the Thomas Telford papers.

In the past year or so, two significant acquisitions of Telford-related material have been made. The first, pursued at auction, with the intention of adding to our Telford holdings in advance of the 2007 anniversary celebrations, was the autograph manuscript draft of verses by Robert Southey, then Poet Laureate, written in 1819 in praise of Telford's work on the Caledonian Canal and its great series of locks (Shelfmark: Acc. 12653). These take the form of 'inscriptions', as if intended to be cut on giant tablets like some Roman composition in commemoration of the ancient engineering work of the legions. (One was actually so inscribed, at Clashnaharry, Inverness.) Indeed, there is a classical form and dignity to Southey's blank verse stanzas, though the language in which his sentiments were expressed has a distinct tendency to the ponderous and pedantic.

Telford's engineering genius, and likewise, the British government's determination to advance the work and the British taxpayer's fortitude in paying for it, are praised as all contributing to an achievement that might bear comparison with that of anything undertaken by 'Rome in her plenitude of power', 'all-glorious Greece' or even 'Egypt, motherland of all the arts' and standing as a work 'worthy of Britain in her proudest age/Of arts, enlightened policy and power.' The descriptions of 'Neptune's Staircase', the remarkable series of locks at Banavie, near Fort →

A barge on the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. © Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

Shelfmark: Acc. 8444.



William, are so 'poetic' that one almost forgets that the subject of Southey's high-flown eulogy is something as utilitarian as a canal cut from rock and dredged from mud and silt.

Southey's third 'inscription' relates to Telford's achievement at large, and looks beyond his constructional work on the Caledonian Canal:

'Telford it was by whose presiding mind  
The whole great work was plann'd & perfected'

But there were his many other canals, bridges,  
aqueducts, harbours and roads:

'Then Minstrels in the age of old Romance  
To their own Merlins magic lore ascribed.

Nor hath he for his native land perform'd Less in  
this proud design...'

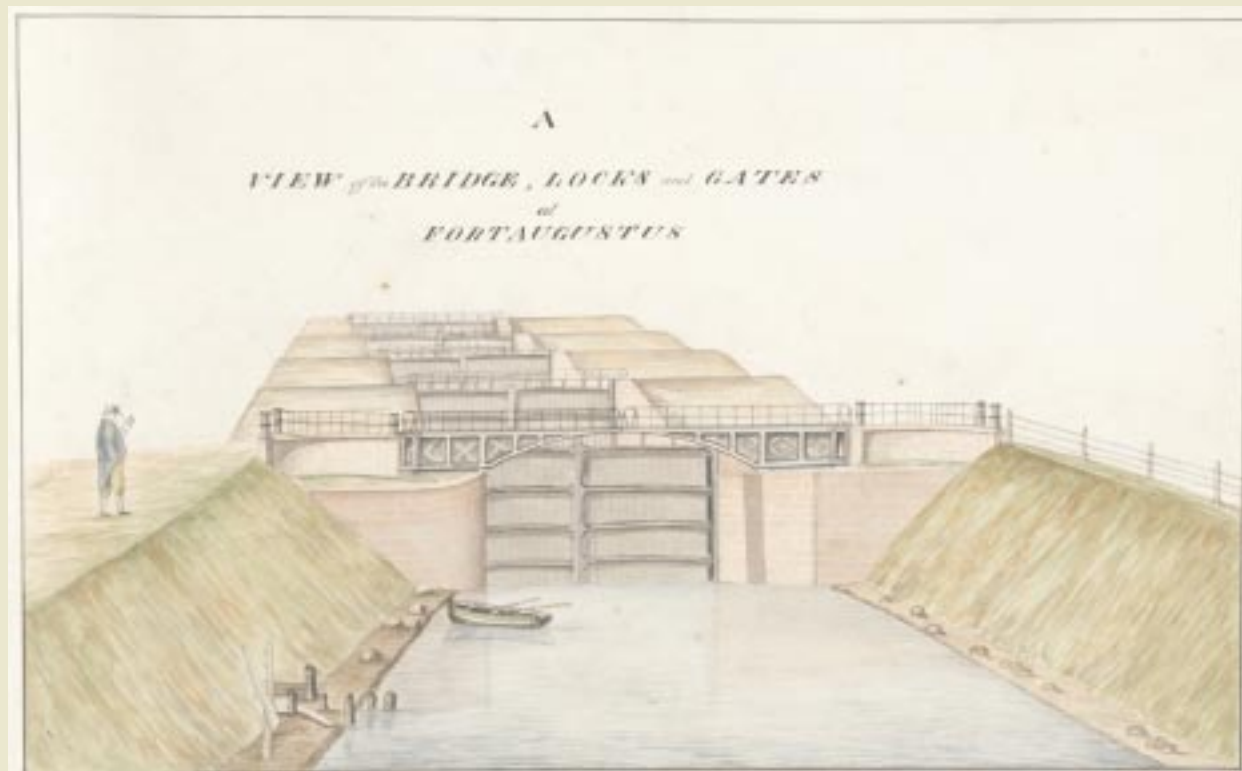
It was Southey who memorably gave to Telford the punning nicknames of 'the colossus of roads' and 'pontifex maximus', that is, the great (British) maker of bridges rather than a (Roman) high priest. Interesting as these 'inscriptions' undoubtedly are, a rather better account of Telford's work emerges in Southey's lively prose journal of his time in the Highlands in the company of the engineer whom he so much admired, and whose achievement no amount of pompous verse can diminish.

The second Telford acquisition is one of those acquired more by luck than by design. A group of letters written by Colonel Sir Robert Gardiner to his wife while touring Scotland in 1819 as equerry

to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (later King of the Belgians), happens to include two which go into some detail on the Caledonian Canal and its construction (Shelfmark: Acc. 12676). Gardiner was an officer of the Royal Horse Artillery who had served with distinction in the Napoleonic War, and in the Waterloo campaign. As a product of the military academy at Woolwich ('the Shop'), Gardiner was naturally interested in technical matters, and this shows in his letters describing the canal. Indeed, at one point, he seems conscious that what he was writing of locks and the intricacies of dredging operations might be in danger of causing his wife's mind and eye to glaze over. Half anxious to be appreciated, half tongue-in-cheek, he interrupted the flow of narrative to add: '*You understand me, Lady Caroline...*'! He had just described, in careful detail, a steam-driven device of Telford's consisting of a string of steel buckets revolving rather like an ancient well-wheel and scooping up soil and rock into a barge which could then discharge its cargo by means of underwater hatches into the deep waters of a loch. 160 tons per hour could thus be excavated. Poor Caroline Gardiner probably wanted to hear more about romantic Highland landscape, and the sketches her husband was taking for her and keeping in a portfolio she had given him. But such was the wonder of Telford's engineering efforts that other memories were somewhat eclipsed in her husband's recollection. **nls**

Below: A view of the bridge, locks and gates at Fort Augustus, by Joseph Mitchell, 1821.

Shelfmark: Acc. 8444.



# CRIME SCENE EDINBURGH:

## 20 Years of Rankin and Rebus

Wednesday 24 October 2007 – Sunday 13 January 2008

**Crack the case**

Venture into Edinburgh's murky underbelly, seen through the eyes of Ian Rankin's Inspector Rebus.

What influences have shaped the work of Ian Rankin and his enduring Rebus character?

How has forensic science and policing changed over the past twenty years?

How does Rebus' Edinburgh reflect the real city?

**Don't let the trail go cold – piece together the evidence yourself at this interactive exhibition.**

**Free Exhibition** National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1EW

Sponsored by Scottish & Newcastle



Monday-Saturday  
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Sunday 2pm to 5pm

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[www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk)







Senior Rare Books Curator **Dr Joseph Marshall** introduces a rare and interesting piece of private publishing.

# Home entertainment, Victorian style

Below: Caberfeigh's watercolour title-page produced by Robert Ballantyne, of *Coral Island* fame.

**C**aberfeigh is one of the most interesting recent purchases for the Library's Rare Book Collections. It is a very rare work written and printed by a Scottish woman.

At the age of 22, Isobel Mackenzie was ill with tuberculosis, and forced to spend much of her time at home, Gollanfield House in Inverness-shire. Her parents gave her a Berri's People's Printing Press to amuse her. She used it to print six issues of

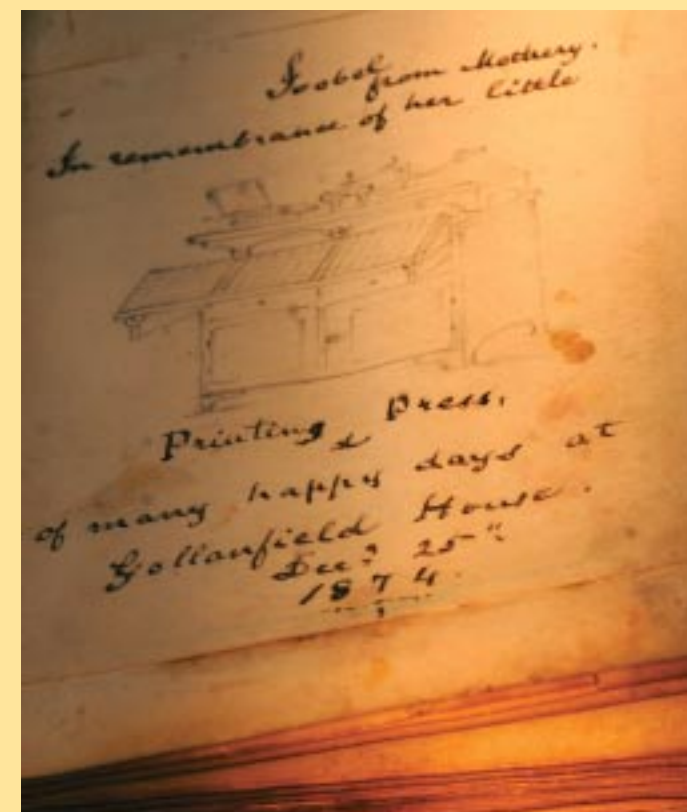
*Caberfeigh: A Magazine of Polite Literature*, during 1874. Despite the subtitle, this is not a typical example of Victorian family literature; it is actually very entertaining and full of satirical humour.

*Cabear feidh* is Gaelic for 'deer antler', and it is the war cry of the Clan Mackenzie. Isobel was evidently determined to rouse herself and her family with stories, jokes, poems and quizzes. She describes visits to England in witty and precise language. In issue two she reflects on her situation in an amusing parody of Walter Scott:

**Unpatriotic Parody.  
By Dumps, in a haar.**

'Breathes there a man with soul so dead,  
Who never, in disgust, hath said,  
"This is, alas! my native land?"  
O, Caledonia! stern and wild,  
Bad nurse for any ailing child!  
Land of thick mist and driving scud,  
Land of the mountain and the mud,  
Land of East wind and horrid Haar,  
Fit swaddling bands for Lochnagar!  
Land of my sires! what mortal hand  
Shall ever dare to weave a band  
To knit me to thy rugged strand!'

The standard of the printing is very good for a private family press, showing that Isobel had considerable technical skill as well as literary talent. →



Isobel Mackenzie (1852-80) was the niece of the writer Robert Michael Ballantyne (1825-94), best known today for his swashbuckling yarn *The Coral Island* (1858). He contributed two articles to *Caberfeigh*: 'From our African correspondent' in issue one and 'Buncle's experiences on the Continent' in issue six. For this copy, he provided a special watercolour title page for the whole volume and two highly dramatic pen and ink drawings for Isobel's own story 'R-R-R Remorse! A Tale of Love! Murder! and Death!!!' in issue five.

This bound set of the magazine was presented to Isobel as a Christmas present for 1874. As well as the Ballantyne illustrations and another colour illustration of Isobel's cat Nixie, there are 14 tipped-in albumen photographs, mainly of family and friends. These include photographs of Isobel and her uncle Robert ('Bob'), as well as an image of Gollanfield

House. In this copy there are manuscript additions, probably in Isobel's hand, which identify the writers of various anonymous articles. For example, on page 13 of issue one, a poem is ascribed to 'Mamma'. There is also a sketch of Isobel's printing press. We bought this copy in June 2007. At one time it was in the library of the Ballantyne bibliographer Eric Quayle, sold at auction in March 2006. Two other sets of this magazine are currently known, one in private hands, one at the University of Texas at Austin, USA. This is, apparently, the only copy of *Caberfeigh* in public ownership in Scotland and is an important addition to the national collections. It was relatively unusual for a woman to print and publish her own works. It was also unusual to print books on such a small scale to such high standards, although we do know of some male aristocrats who ran printing presses in the family castle. However, there do

not appear to be other examples of women writing and printing their own books at home in this way. *Caberfeigh* is, as far as we know, in a class of its own. It sheds more light on a recognised Scottish writer, Ballantyne, but more importantly, it shows that women in Victorian Scotland could write and print their own works with considerable success. nls

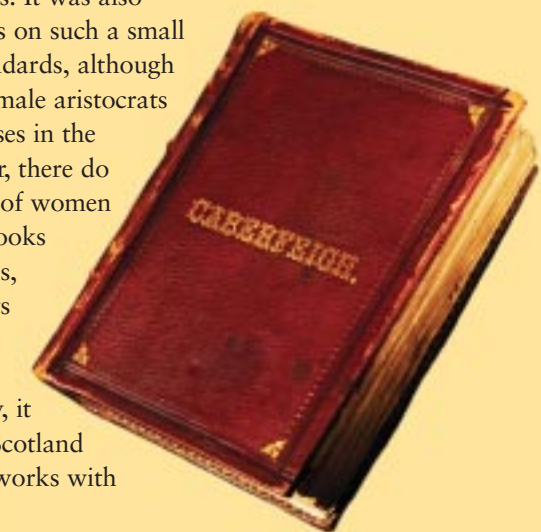
## Discover more

Eric Quayle, *R. M. Ballantyne: a bibliography of first editions*, 1968

*Caberfeigh: A Magazine of Polite Literature*.

Shelfmark: RB.s.2669

Left: The sketch shows the type of printing press Mackenzie would have used to produce the book.





# Digital collections

In the second feature on the Library's digital treasures, we highlight two specialist resources on women in literature, and a major educational site of Scottish culture.

Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period and British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries, both produced by Alexander Street Press, complement our extensive print and archive collections on women in literature.

Scottish Women Poets provides the full text of over 60 volumes of lyric poetry by 51 Scottish women poets, written between 1789 and 1832. With over 8,000 pages, and extensive critical and biographical essays, this resource is invaluable for those interested in female writing during this period. As well as accessing the poems by searching title, author or full-text, you can look for poets by birthplace, nationality, ethnicity and age, or simply stumble across such gems as 'A scotch pastoral ... attempted in English'.

British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries is a unique collection of the personal writings of around 500 women from the British Isles. Spanning 300 years, and with over 100,000 pages taken from published and manuscript material, this collection provides a fascinating and unique insight into the lives and personal writings of women over the last three centuries. You can browse by personal and historical

events, such as emigration, the death of a child, the Thirty Years War or the Jacobite Risings, as well as searching by age, nationality, occupation, place, year, and author.

Scottish Archives Network (SCRAN) is a rich treasure trove in its own right, and with just under 350,000 digital images, movies and sounds is one of the largest and richest educational online services in the UK. While the focus is on Scottish culture through the ages, UK and international heritage is also covered. From the standing stones of Aberdeen to medieval literature of the Highlands and Islands, and from the bothy ballads to Elvis Presley, SCRAN, provides images and resources to support teaching and life long learning across the spectrum. There are guides and mini-sites to help you use the resources, as well as tools for designing and assembling your own personal collections or teaching packages. The collections are taken from a host of museums, galleries, archives, the media and private collectors from across the UK and beyond.

These three resources are available on PCs in the Library, with plans to make some available remotely in the near future. [nls](http://www.nls.uk)

In the next issue, we look at new resources in the areas of science, government, business and music.



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# Byron writes to reply

In issue 4 of Discover NLS, we published John Murray Archive Writer in Residence Ken Cockburn's letter to Byron. Writer and historian **Diane Morgan** reflects on the poet's early life in Aberdeen and imagines his response.



Byron, aged 17, from Finden's illustrations of the life and works of Lord Byron, by Edward Finden, 1833-34.

Shelfmark: NG.1341.a.9.

My dear Murray  
 your very sincerely  
 Byron

My Dear Cockburn,

My thanks for your most interesting letter. I am glad that you are enjoying the 'verve and charm' of my writing and I felt that I must reply. What a capital idea to publish a picture of my splendid statue, which seems almost to dominate the new Grammar School. Like the school, the statue was, of course, long after my time but I believe that to try to view it now is a risky business. The entrance to the school is set about with all sorts of barriers and one is likely to be chased off as a pederast.

But I must challenge you, my dear Cockburn, when you write of my statue, 'I'm not sure you would be pleased to think that you have remained thus in a city you had no affection for. Not at all! Have you not yet in your labours come across my letter to Murray written in 1822 from Pisa:

*My heart warms to the Tartan or to anything of Scotland which reminds me of Aberdeen...*

Did Murray throw it to the back of his grate? By the way, I think it is stated in the introduction to your piece that Aberdeen was my birthplace. No, that honour goes to the back drawing room of No. 16 Holles Street, Cavendish Square, London. And a final bone to pick; the streets that you name, called in my honour, are not all genteelly 'tucked away in a western suburb' but in a council estate in the north of the city. Would they had gone a little further north still, to Woodside, a quaint rural village in my day, but what a place for a boy to be! They were digging out a great lade for a new lint mill, and excavating a mighty canal as well. My old nursemaid, Agnes Gray, stayed in Woodside and I spent some time there with her family in the early summer of 1798, making my farewells before I set off for Newstead.

Mama and I had arrived in Aberdeen in 1790 when I was but two. We lodged briefly in Virginia Street, a new street by the quay, but Mama objected to the long haul to the Castlegate and the shops by way of Marischal Street, one of the most handsome streets in town, but undeniably steep. (I was a fractious infant and not able to walk quite properly then, never could.) Later we lived in Queen Street, another new street between Broad Street and North Street. We lodged with James Anderson, a perfumer, who also acted as Mama's man of affairs. He had a shop on the ground floor of his building and sold spangles, earrings, fancy hats for children, knee buckles for one's breeches, lots of things that took my magpie fancy. He also sold tickets for the Theatre at the far end of Queen Street. There was another, the Theatre Royal in Marischal Street. Both were quite newly built, and when I was just nine, I was taken to the Royal to see *Romeo and Juliet* and scenes from *The Taming of the Shrew*. I was so annoyed at Petruchio that I jumped up and called out to him.

In 1792 we settled at No. 64 Broad Street, a stone's throw from the Castlegate. It was a spacious and elegant street, the most fashionable in town, bar the Gallowgate. Do not, I pray you, believe these tales that we moved 'to and fro through a succession of shabby lodgings at Aberdeen'. We lived at our Broad Street apartment for seven of the eight years we spent in Aberdeen, and I attended the Grammar School for almost as long as I attended Harrow. We had six rooms. In the spacious sitting room with its three tall windows facing on to Broad Street, I occupied myself for hours, watching bustling carriages and rumbling carts, heading towards the Old Town, the Brig o' Balgownie and the north.

Marischal College stood in a courtyard behind our house and was entered by a close. I used to go with my playmates to fetch away dead hens from the Flesh Market in Queen Street, ones that had not been sold. We pelted the students with them. The Professor of Moral Philosophy, 'the poet Beattie' as he was called, whom I saw often, had rooms in the College. He would shake his stick at us and call on George Pirie the College porter to chase us out. Beattie was at that time an old man, though still famous. Little did I think then that he could influence me in any way. But that was some years before I read *The Minstrel*. →



Mama, for all her faults, was unfailingly thrifty. She had a yearly income of £135, a reasonable sum in spite of all the depredations of my dear papa. My great grandmama, the dowager Lady Gight, left her a legacy which increased her income to £190 a year. Lady Gight lived with her sister, Mama's great-aunt, in Banff and we went on holiday there, staying with them at Low Street. We also visited another of Mama's great-aunts, Mrs Abercromby of Birkenbog and I had a capital time, pitching crackers into the sockets of her crystal candelabra. My best wheeze was the time when I dressed up a bolster in my red jacket and nankeen breeches and hurled it out of the window from one of the upper bedrooms, accompanying this cargo with a piercing shriek. Mama and her great aunt were sewing in the drawing room below and ran out in a state of alarm and despair. When they discovered the truth, Mrs Abercromby was all for giving me a thrashing.

But I am prattling on. As one who labours in a library, it is the books you will want to know about. Mama was an avid reader and used to quote from the *Aberdeen Journal* in her letters to Augusta. She had no library of her own but she could afford to be a member of one or more of the three circulating libraries in the city. They would advertise their latest acquisitions in the *Journal*. Provost Brown used to advertise Baron de Tott's *Memoirs* which I read avidly. I mention this in *Don Juan*. Also Gessner's *Death of Abel*, which I think came from Angus' library. You will recall that in the preface to *Cain*, I note that I read it when I was eight years of age in Aberdeen. Scholars have argued that, with the exception of Milton, there is no poet on whom Bible history had greater influence than myself. And it was in Aberdeen that I gained that knowledge. I had time then, not always the case in my later life. There were great honeypots of booksellers' shops in Broad Street and the Narrow Wynd round which I buzzed continually, a small and determined bee. I used to read nightly by candlelight, the bed clothes pulled around my head. Very dangerous, to think of it. As I wrote to Murray from Ravenna in October 1821:

*I am a great reader and admirer of those books and had read them through and through before I was eight years old – that is to say the Old Testament – for the New struck me as a task, but the other as a pleasure – I speak as a boy - from the recollected impression of that period at Aberdeen in 1796.*

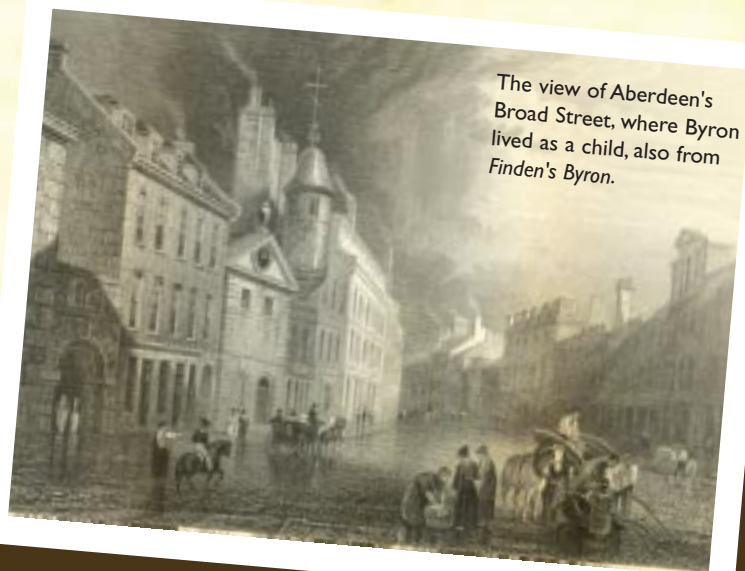
Did you know that I read four histories of Turkey while in Aberdeen? One was *The General History of the Turks* by Richard Knolles. I believe it had much influence on my subsequent wish to visit the Levant and perhaps gave the tinge of the orient that has been observed in my poetry. I remember Knolles' scheming viziers, and pashas, warlike Transylvanians, splendid pavilions, mutinous armies and revolting slaves. My great favourite was the boy-Sultan, Achmat, who prevented the 'insolent Turmoils of the Janissaries' and exiled his interfering granny, 'a most proud, ambitious and imperious Woman' like my great-aunt Birkenbog, I have no doubt. ...

Alas, I fear I am fading, passing from your orbit.

Farewell,

George Gordon

The view of Aberdeen's Broad Street, where Byron lived as a child, also from Finden's Byron.



Marischal College, Broad Street, in Byron's time, by James Skene.



#### Discover more

The University of Manchester's John Rylands Library has recently opened a Byron Centre based on its substantial new archive of Byron-related material. To learn more, visit: [www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/subjectareas/englishamericanstudies/research/ByronCentre](http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/subjectareas/englishamericanstudies/research/ByronCentre)

The National Library of Scotland needs your support for the

## JOHN MURRAY ARCHIVE CAMPAIGN

### Acquiring, preserving and providing access to the John Murray Archive

The John Murray Archive has been described as 'one of the most important publisher's archives to be made available for over a century'. John Murray's firm published the work of the leading thinkers and writers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Their works of literature, science, politics, religion, travel and exploration shaped the modern world. The Archive includes correspondence, business records and manuscripts, representing many of the world's most celebrated writers, thinkers, politicians, explorers, economists and scientists. Correspondents include: **Thomas Carlyle, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Byron, Charles Darwin and David Livingstone** to name but a few. The Archive contains around 150,000 items and has been valued in excess of £45 million. On average, the cost of conserving and digitising just one manuscript exceeds £1,000 but the value of doing so lies in the preservation of our history for generations to come.

The National Library of Scotland has launched the campaign to complete the acquisition and access plans for the Archive, with a target of £6.5million, **£1 million of which we hope to raise through public support.**

As part of our plans to make the Archive as accessible as possible, we have opened a permanent JMA Exhibition in our George IV Bridge building. We are working with schools, colleges, universities, community learner groups and various cultural institutions to create and support public exhibitions and deliver a programme of educational activities around the JMA.

### How you can help

You can **make a gift** to the campaign by cheque, from a charity account, over a period of time by **Direct Debit** or on a credit or debit card. As NLS is a charity, UK taxpayers can increase the value of their donations through Gift Aid. If you are a **US taxpayer** please contact the Development Office for details of our American Friends of the National Library of Scotland.

You can make a lasting impact by leaving a **gift in your will**. The charitable status of NLS means that the value of any gift you may wish to make is deducted from your estate prior to the calculation of inheritance tax. Please contact us for our **Legacy Guide** or to discuss any intentions you may have.

To make a gift, learn more about the campaign for the John Murray Archive or how to otherwise support NLS, please contact the NLS Development Office on:

**0131 623 3734**  
**development@nls.uk**

All enquiries will be taken in the strictest confidence.





# Abolitionists and apologists: Scotland's Slave Trade stories

Dr Eric Graham finds ample evidence of Scots embroiled in the shameful business of slavery and its eventual abolition.

This year's bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in 1807 has stirred considerable interest in Scotland's murky dealings with Africa and the Americas during the slavery era. The previously held assumption was that this inhuman business was exclusive to the English ports of London, Liverpool and Bristol.

Indeed, this sense of detachment from England's shameful past has been reinforced by the elaborate conferences, new exhibitions and commemorations south of the border. Understandably, they focus on the iconic figure of William Wilberforce (MP for Hull) and his circle of friends in the London-centred 'Clapham Sect' - all in all, a rather English affair.

Yet the evidence available from NLS, when matched to the archives held around Scotland, tells a very different story. This story is one of the deep and direct involvement of Scots in every aspect of the transatlantic slave trade and as a power-house for the abolitionist movement.

To be disposed of  
A NEGRO WOMAN, nan  
nineteen years of age, b  
up in Charlesstoun, in the Provin  
lina, speaks good English, an  
House-wench, and washer and  
tender and careful of children.  
Child, a Negro boy, about a ye  
be disposed of with the mother  
inquire at the publisher of this p



Far left: Revd Dr Robert Walker (1755-1808) Skating on Duddingston Loch by Sir Henry Raeburn c.1795. © Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Left: Slave sale poster from the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (1721-73), one of ten such adverts.

Left Below: Slaves thrown overboard from the ship, *Zong*.

Right: A slave revolt onboard, from William Fox's *A Brief History of the Wesleyan Missions on the West Coast of Africa* (London, 1851).

An influential figure in the Scottish abolitionist campaign was William Dickson of Moffat. His experiences as Secretary to the Governor of Barbados prompted him to galvanise the Scottish movement. In the process of doing so, he won the support of the Reverend Robert Walker of Canongate, Edinburgh, who is believed to have been immortalised by Henry Raeburn's portrait as the 'Skating Minister on Duddingston Loch' on display at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

While the final tally of slaving voyages originating from Scottish ports - Port Glasgow, Greenock, Leith and Montrose - is relatively small (c. 20 compared to the hundreds from Liverpool alone), their accounts are the earliest and by far the most complete to have survived. Moreover, after their withdrawal from direct slaving, in the mid 1760s, a significant number of local merchants and captains continued to recruit crews from their home locality to serve on the London and Liverpool slavers they held an interest in.

The National Library holds two, quite extraordinary, accounts by Scottish apprentices recruited in this way, the only two written by ordinary seaman. These come from the handful of first-hand testimonies of the notorious 'Middle Passage' of the triangular trade - from Africa to the Americas. Furthermore, they have the distinction of offering dramatically divergent views as to the morality of the trade.

The earliest is that of Thomas Smith from Arbroath. Thomas wrote his account in his old age, ten years after his conscience had been awakened by a visit from agents of Campbell Haliburton - the secretary of the Edinburgh Abolitionist Society.

Thomas states that he was recruited in 1762 by a local captain who commanded the *Ann Galley* of London. On boarding her, he was impressed that her officers and fellow apprentices were also Scots and so he considered himself in good company. His naivety was completely dispelled once his brig started slaving along the Guinea Coast:

'What I saw inflicted on others is almost beyond the power of language to describe. It is to be observed, that the negroes as soon as they are taken onboard of any of the ships in this trade, they are all circumcised: and still to add more to the misery of these poor wretched creatures, they are loaded with heavy shackles, and every ten are chained together, fast by the necks, hands and feet, and marked with a burnt-iron on the right hip. Bound down with irons, and crushed almost unto death, and all for the purpose of maintaining due subordination, as it is called, and preserving the peace and safety of everyone onboard.'

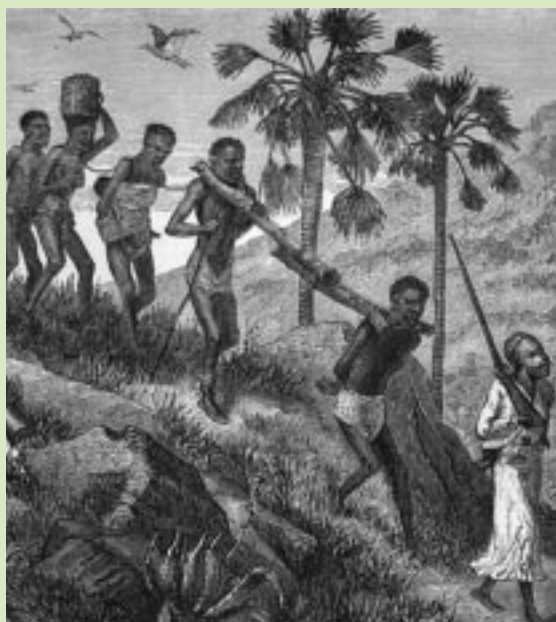
He goes on to relate that, weeks later, these slaves broke free of their chains. After a desperate and bloody struggle, they succeeded in taking the ship. Thomas was lucky to escape on the longboat. He soon joined a nearby slaver which had 450 enslaved Africans crammed onboard. During the Middle Passage, 45 died and were thrown overboard to the sharks. On reaching Jamaica, Thomas was so sickened by what he had seen and done, that he left his ship without taking his wages. His tale was duly recorded by his abolitionist visitors 40 years later.

In contrast, the account of Samuel Robinson of Wigton is that of an unrepentant 'apologist'. He was motivated, at the age of 81, to denounce the abolitionists for their 'gross misstatements reporting of West Indian slavery and the horrors of the Middle Passage.'

Samuel states that he was recruited in 1800 by his uncle - commander of the *Lady Nelson* of Liverpool (owned by his mother's cousin) - when he was 13. Like Thomas, he was reassured that his officers and apprentices were from his →







home area. Unlike him, he was not shocked by slaving and later sought to repudiate the horror tales that the abolitionists were spreading around. He reckoned that onboard conditions were so improved by the new regulations imposed by the Middle Passage Act of 1788 that his slaves were better fed and looked after than his crew, two-thirds of whom died.

These are but two gems held by the Library. Other items of great interest include the publications of Haliburton's Edinburgh Abolitionist Society – the third most active after London and Manchester. Similar accounts of other local societies are held in libraries around Scotland. Their combined efforts ensured that one third of all petitions sent to Parliament during the first great campaign of 1792 came from north of the border.

Meanwhile, Scots such as James Stephen and Zachary Macaulay were leading figures in Wilberforce's London circle of abolitionists, where their pens played a major part in the moral and philosophical debate. Macaulay later edited the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, the leading abolitionist journal. These can be weighed against those supporting slavery, such as the one-time governor of the slaving fortress Cape Coast Castle, Archibald Dalziel of Kirkliston, author of *A History of Dahomy*. All such authors and publications can be readily found via the NLS catalogue.

Then there is the poignant and chilling, fleeting presence of black slaves in Scotland, as found in the newspaper advertisements for 'runaway' servants or servants 'for sale', prior to the Wedderburn v Knight ruling in 1778 that forbade slave owning in Scotland.

The profits of plantation slavery paid for many a fine town house and estate back in Scotland, before and after the passing of the 1807 Act. NLS holds the foreign trade ledgers of Alexander Houstoun & Co of Glasgow, the largest West India trading house whose bankruptcy was the greatest commercial collapse of the period.

From the post-1807 era, the writings and pamphlets of those who took up the protracted struggle to end slavery throughout the British Empire (effectively 1838) and then pushed on to secure the freedom of all black Americans (1865), await a wider recognition.

Next year the momentum generated by the bi-centenary year will hopefully be sustained and heighten public awareness of these pioneering campaigns for social justice, during which women across Scotland, for the first time, took to the public stage in defence of their black sisters in slavery. Their methods still remain the blueprint for all peaceful protest movements since. **nls**



Top left: Enslaved men, women and children being marched to the coast.

Above: Slave irons

#### Discover more

Robinson, Samuel, *A Sailor Boy's Experience aboard a Slave Ship* (Hamilton, 1867).

Shelfmark 3.2782(5).

'Society at Edinburgh for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade'.

*Edinburgh Evening Courant 1721-1773*, with ten slavery-related adverts.

Houston Papers

(MS 8793-8800).

Smith, Thomas, *Narrative, of an unfortunate voyage to the coast of Africa* (1813)

Shelfmark ABS.1.206.001

#### Further reading

Graham, Eric J, *Seawolves: Pirates and the Scots* (Birlinn, 2005)

Shelfmark HB2.206.1.553.

Whyte, Iain, *Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756-1838* (Edinburgh, 2006)

Shelfmark HB2.206.1.553.

The publications of the Abolition Society of Edinburgh, along with many other contemporary items surrounding the abolition of slavery, can be found in the Library's early printed collections using the online catalogue.

Digital resources comprising a wealth of contemporary material include *Selected Americana from Sabin's directory of books relating to America and Early American Imprints, 1639-1800*.

Join Eric and other leading experts for a free one-day seminar at NLS Causewayside on **Tuesday 13 November, 9.30am - 4pm**.

#### Scotland and Slavery: The Evidence

What was Scotland's role in the slave trade and in the movement for abolition? Handle the evidence and share in the latest discoveries, at this seminar with talks and discussions for all interested. Speakers include Professor Tom Devine, Rev Dr Iain Whyte, Sheila Asante, Dr Alex Murdoch, Professor John Cairns, Professor Geoffrey Palmer and Dr Eric J Graham.

# Industrial-scale digitisation for world's books

In the first of a two-part series, Strategic Policy Manger **David Hunter** outlines some mass digitisation projects which aim to place the world's library collections on the world wide web.

In 2004, Google announced that they were working with a group of major research libraries to digitise entire library collections<sup>1</sup>. This brought the astonishing vision that all the world's books might be accessible online closer to reality, potentially providing researchers with previously unimagined possibilities.

The first results of this work are now becoming available through Google Book Search <http://books.google.com/>. If you enter the word 'fossil' into the keyword search, some 59,000 books with 'fossil' content are listed. At present, 3,195 of these have full-text views; for the others (usually because of copyright restrictions), only 'snippets' are available (however, keyword searches still work for these books, even though the text itself remains hidden). The service also tells you where to find actual copies of the book in a library or a bookshop. Some publishers and authors, as well as libraries, promote their works this way too - although there have been well-publicised legal challenges over Google's right to make digital copies of material still in copyright.

'Mass digitisation' has been defined as 'the conversion of materials on an industrial scale. That is, conversion of whole libraries without making a selection of individual materials'<sup>2</sup>. These initiatives have been made possible by the development of preservation-friendly scanners which can now digitise up to 10,000 pages (or 50 books) in a single day. These scanned images often receive Optical Character Recognition (OCR) treatment, so that the text can be searched by keyword - a powerful tool for researchers.

Google is not the only, nor the first, player in this mass digitisation field. American non-profit bodies such as the Internet Archive and the Open Content Alliance have led a range of initiatives, including the Million Book Project<sup>3</sup>, while Project Gutenberg is another not-for-profit

resource<sup>4</sup>. Last year, the National Library of Norway announced its plan to digitise its entire collection<sup>5</sup>, while the British Library and many other national libraries and archives are also active in this field.

The fruit of some of these labours can already be harvested here at NLS. The Times Digital Archive offers over seven million newspaper pages from 1785 to 1985. Another early, publisher-led example is Early English Books Online (EEBO) which contains 100,000 books from the pre-1700 era, while Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) has 26 million digitised, searchable pages of 18th-century books. NLS has contributed hundreds of books to these projects, and all these services, and many others, are available to registered readers at NLS, and in some cases, (where licensing contracts permit) on PCs outside of our buildings; see [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk) for details.

Researchers increasingly want and expect online resources and we are planning to dramatically increase the amount of material we digitise to meet this demand.

The services available to researchers today are likely to be just the beginning, as new, innovative services are developed around this digital material. The next edition of Discover NLS will look at some of the plans and possibilities. **nls**

#### Discover more

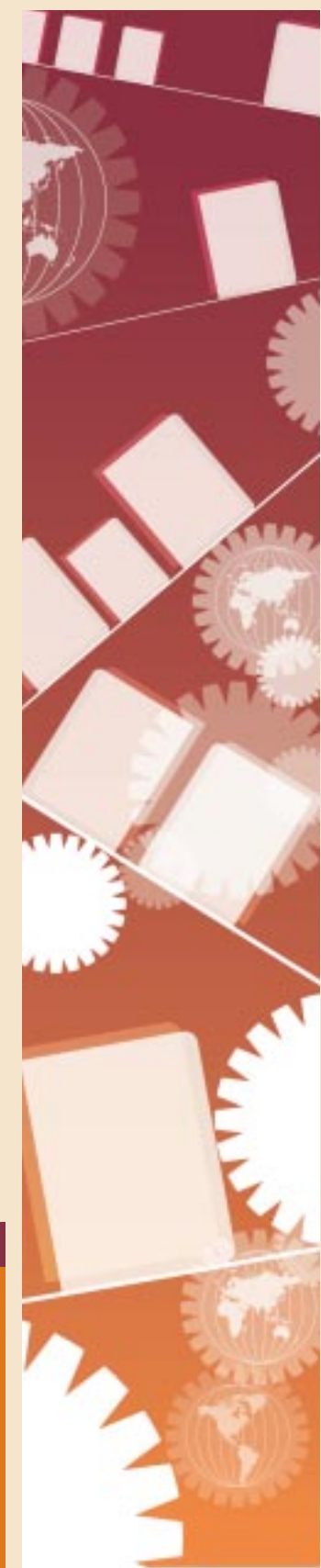
<sup>1</sup> [www.google.com/press/pressrel/print\\_library.html](http://www.google.com/press/pressrel/print_library.html)

<sup>2</sup> *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* Volume 32, Issue 6 [www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/00991333](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/00991333)

<sup>3</sup> The Million Book Project [www.rr.cs.cmu.edu/mbdl.htm](http://www.rr.cs.cmu.edu/mbdl.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.gutenberg.org>

<sup>5</sup> [www.nb.no/english/facts/about\\_the\\_national\\_library/](http://www.nb.no/english/facts/about_the_national_library/)






# Parliamentary debates

When the conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (ICHRPI) came to Scotland for the first time in September, NLS took the opportunity to host some of the sessions. **Daniel Gray** and **Dr Maria Castrillo** report back.

The ICHRPI promotes research into the history and growth of parliamentary institutions worldwide. The National Library was one of several venues chosen to host sessions in September. The papers given focused mainly on Scottish political and social history, reflecting the renewed international interest in Scotland's parliamentary past. Over two days in September, papers were given on a plethora of topics largely connected with the events leading up to the 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England. →



The Riding of the Scottish Parliament in 1685  Shelfmark: Adv.Ms.31.4.22

Tuesday's session opened with Dr Alan MacDonald, who explored the causes behind the declining role of parliaments and conventions of estates in the context of the 1603 Union of Crowns. Dr Laura Stewart's paper focused on the financial side of Anglo-Scottish relations during the civil wars of the 17th century. She argued that English money, which had funded the Scottish army in England, undermined the Scottish Parliament and threatened the religious unity and political autonomy of Scotland. Afterwards, Dr John Young analysed the office of President of the Scottish Parliament under the Covenant administration. In 1640, the king did not send a representative to the Scottish Parliament; as a result, the estates elected a president whose role became increasingly influential during the Covenant period.

The Duke of Hamilton's Diary and its significance to Scottish parliamentary history was the subject of Dr John Scally's contribution. The diary is the only contemporary Scottish political document of its type, and is particularly interesting in the way it illustrates what he called 'the sophisticated politics of Scottish parties and parliament in that time.'

Paula Hughes presented a paper on the Scottish Parliament's role in the witch-hunt of 1649 to 1650. This was followed by Dr Alistair Mann's analysis of the unionist and nationalist views expressed in James VII's writings. The king became a nationalist out of convenience and considered the 1689 revolution an act of judgement against his personal opinions.


The session closed with Kirsty McAlister, who explored the role of the Earl of Moray as High Commissioner to the 1686 Scottish Parliament. The earl, a long-standing supporter of King James VII, was entrusted with the delicate task of persuading the Scottish Parliament to tolerate Catholics and relax the laws that prevented them from accessing public offices. Moray failed to accomplish the royal mission and, as a consequence, opposition to James VII's religious policies grew in Scotland.

The second day's papers were equally wide-ranging. Dr Derek Patrick provided an account of Scotland in the context of the Glorious Bloodless Revolution of 1688. Dr Jeffrey Stephen talked on the relationship between the Scottish Kirk

and Scottish Parliament during the years leading up to the Union, giving an insight into the clergymen who feared that their political influence would be eroded if an alliance with London became a reality. Dr Douglas Watt analysed the financial burden left by the Darien project and the influence it had on leading Scotland into the Union of 1707.

Conventional perceptions about the Scottish Parliament before and after the Union in the context of public debate were the main topic of Dr Oili Pulkkinen's paper. Laura Rayner discussed the role of the Privy Council in the years leading up to the Union of 1707. Its main remit was to maintain public order in Scotland as well as to implement legislation and economic regulations. Dr Gordon Pentland explored hostile representations of the Scots and Scottish politicians in the satirical political prints of the 18th century.

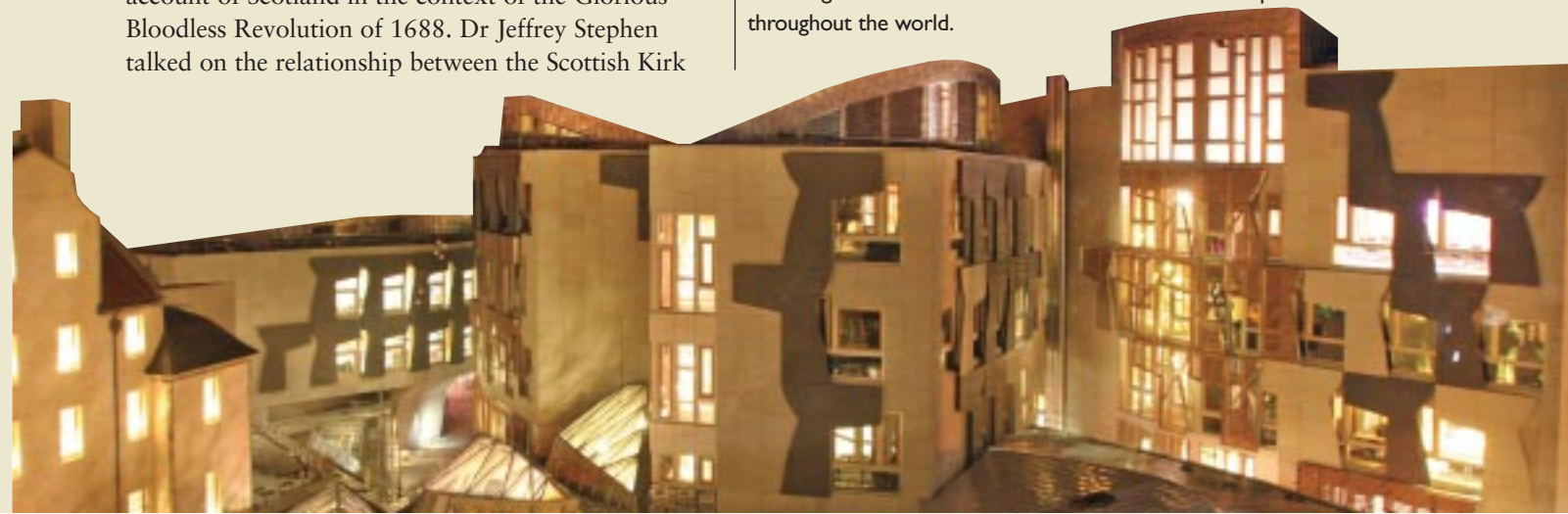
The conference closed with Professor Derek Law, who introduced the audience to the ASPECT (Access to Scottish Parliamentary Election Candidate Materials) database, a digital archive of leaflets and other ephemera produced by candidates and political parties for the Scottish parliamentary elections in 1999 and 2003. The Library contributed to the event with a display of items from its vast collection of manuscripts relating to parliamentary history. These were chosen for their relevance to the topics discussed and included, among others, the Duke of Hamilton's Parliamentary Diary (1648) and documents criticising the proposed Act of Union of 1707.

The Library was a fitting venue in which an international audience of scholars could scrutinise many of the original documents relating to Scotland's parliamentary past; the conference provided a valuable opportunity to explore this important chapter of Scottish history. 

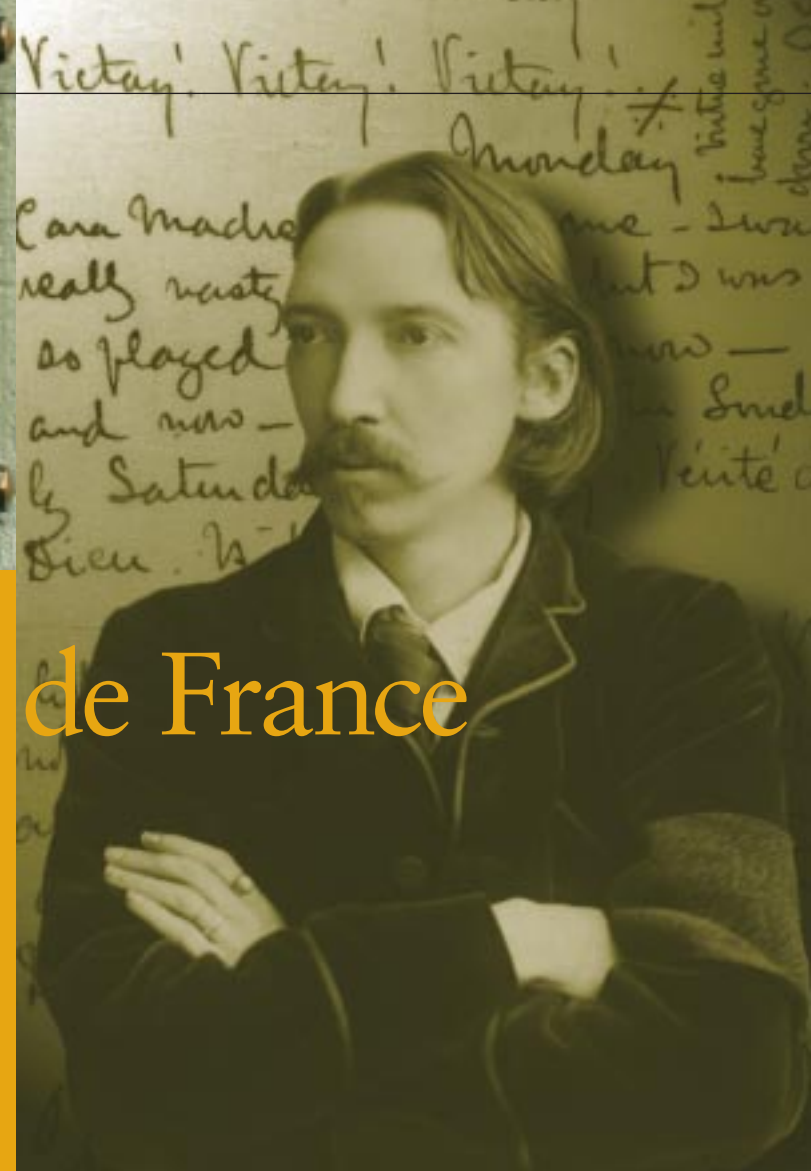
## Discover more

Papers from the conference will be published in the journal of ICHRPI, *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, published by Ashgate, and in specialist academic volumes reflecting the interests of the Commission's membership throughout the world.

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## A writer's tour de France

For the past 13 years, the Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship has given Scottish writers the chance to develop their work during a two-month stay at Hotel Chevillon, International Arts Centre, in France's Grez-sur-Loing, where Stevenson (pictured right) often stayed in the 1870s. Previous fellow and present-day judge **Janice Galloway** reflects on her experiences at the retreat.

March 2006.

There is none at home and here, it's gifted. Time in the world, that is.

Sundown, snowing, 78 birds sit paired in one tree.

Leaves on the leafless, stranded clamshells.

There's a smell of woodsmoke, a landing strip of moon a river wide.

It's the pairing, their silence, that strikes.

I'm not a diary writer and never have been, but I kept notes in Grez, away from home on what is often called an 'artist's retreat', but which feels more like an advance to undergo. I am glad of these notes now, because without them, there would be not much to say. Not much was part of the point. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Grez-sur-Loing is a tiny place near Fontainebleau, populated only by elusive sorts – occasional dog-walkers, men in vans, individuals

nipping into the sole boulangerie to buy the daily family-load of bread. The restaurant never seemed to house more than three people and one suspected two of them were the owners. Despite this apparent ghostliness, it was once a place for arty sorts to come and enjoy the light – Karl Larsson, Delius and Strindberg among them. Robert Louis Stevenson stayed here, at the Hotel Chevillon in the town's main street, and in doing so, seems to have set a precedent for other Scottish writers. No longer a hotel but an International Arts Centre run by a Swedish trust (the Stiftelsen Foundation), Chevillon serves not only as a hide-out for Scandinavian visual artists, but for sponsored Scottish writers to spend up to two months on their craft.

I took no car, and availed myself of the on-site, gratis bikes for only 200 yards or so till I fell off. On foot, then, I walked round the local streets, cemetery, castle, woods and parkland and fed the geese. I listened out for wild boar and heard none. Now and then, a cat appeared in need of clapping and I gratefully obliged. I →

I sharpened pencils and looked out of the window, ate cheese and salad from yellow plates I bought specially from the supermarket in Nemours, and washing them was a bubbly joy. I slept during the afternoons and read most of the night, things I'd hidden on bookshelves at home for lack of time, breathing space, preoccupation with shopping, tidying, making the tea, helping with homework, finding entertainment, running a taxi service and plumbing the depths of self-blame about too seldom finding enough energy for work.

May 2006.

Usual stroll to the bridge to feed the geese. No ducks. I waited on after the geese and bread were gone, church bell starting up and circles appearing on the water. Dragonflies, the reed down there was thick with them. One appeared suddenly, dead on eye-level, hovering and seeming to stare. Then something else moved: a flutter and dive, and the dragonfly was snapped away from under my nose. Took a minute to realise what it was - a swallow with a good aim and steel nerves. The bell was still chiming seven.

Those were it: 'my experiences in Grez'. They were not much and they were everything.

Doing socks in the dark and waiting for the spin cycle to end, I switched off the bulb in the laundry to watch the rain outside. The annexe smelled of soap and bleach and marble, fresh things lining up to dry. Through the bars of the door, the light from upstairs, my room, made it seem that someone was up there, working.

Sometimes, it was me. And that was the real experience. **nls**

### Discover more

Join Janice and five previous RLS Fellows at **Travelling Hopefully**, a free event at NLS on **20 November 7pm**, when they meet to read from their work and discuss their experiences.

The RLS Fellowship is jointly organised and supported by NLS and the Scottish Arts Council. To learn more about the Fellowship, or to download an entry form, please visit [www.scottisharts.org.uk/1/information/publication](http://www.scottisharts.org.uk/1/information/publication)

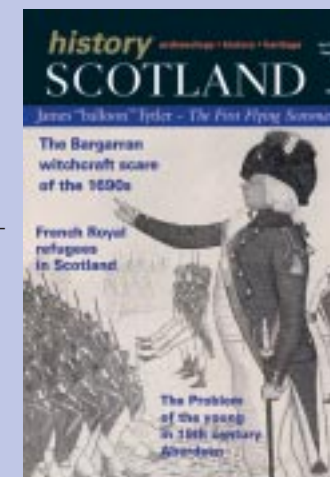
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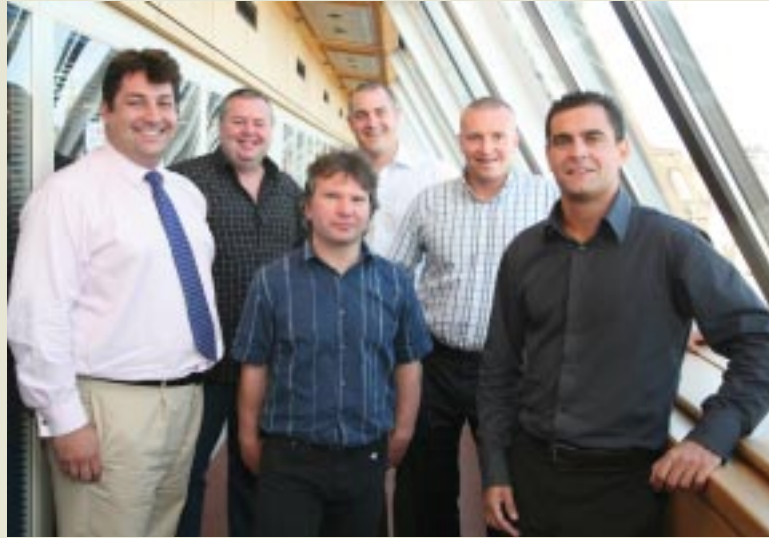
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# Meet the team

The Trusted Digital Repository is perhaps the most complex and ambitious project in the Library's recent history. The project will deliver the means by which all 'Scottish-interest' digital material will be made available, while also preserving it for the very long term. A project team was appointed earlier this year. We speak to some of them and get their views on the challenges and opportunities involved.



## Meet the Trusted Digital Repository project team: From left to right:

### James Toon, TDR Project Manager

James has overall responsibility for delivering the TDR project. He manages the project team and relations with other institutions.

### Chad Crossman, Technical Architect

Chad is responsible for designing the overall solution, making sure the individual components of it (databases, the graphic front-end, preservation software etc) all work in conjunction with one another. He also liaises with the many stakeholders involved.

### Paul Cunnea, Digital Collections Development Co-ordinator

Paul's role in the TDR team is to manage the collection of digital content for the repository, currently focusing on the collection and archiving of websites.

### Barry Foster, Business/Test Analyst

Barry tests the software used in the project and writes the specifications needed.

### Vincent Moffat, Systems Developer

Vince is responsible for the design and development of software applications.

### Oscar Contreras, JMA Web Support Officer

Oscar designs and develops the John Murray Archive web pages. He has also been working on the IRIScotland project, a repository system and an important early part of the TDR, applying his design skills to help improving the look-and-feel of the application.

## What is this project's biggest challenge for you personally?

**James Toon:** The most complicated and intangible part of the project is in how we achieve the position of trust - how we get to the point where our customers recognise it as a Trusted Digital Repository, in the same way that they trust us to look after our books for centuries to come.

**Chad Crossman:** The best part of the project for me is having to work out an architecture and ensuring it will adapt to the future needs of the Library.

**Paul Cunnea:** Not coming from a technical background myself, it's very exciting to be involved in such a groundbreaking and ambitious digital project, and with such a committed and creative team. The most

interesting area for me is being able to work with the range and breadth of content in the websites selected for the web archive.

## What will be the most exciting outcome of the TDR?

**James Toon:** It offers a tremendous opportunity to deliver a large, widely accessible, multi-purpose digital library with guaranteed sustainability, and to place Scotland at the forefront of this work internationally.

**Chad Crossman:** Seeing every single component we develop replaced over time without any impact on the other components in the system.

**Paul Cunnea:** To have a system in place that we are confident can continue to preserve and provide public access to the websites and other digital content that we create and collect for centuries to come.

IDEAS THAT SHAPED THE WORLD:

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Foreword by Magnus Linklater

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