

# LOCAL HEROES:

## The Art of the Graphic Novel

4 April - 1 June

### Free Exhibition

Comic books have come a long way. Follow their heroic journey, from newspaper strips to international literary acclaim.

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



Image Courtesy of Waverley Books Ltd.

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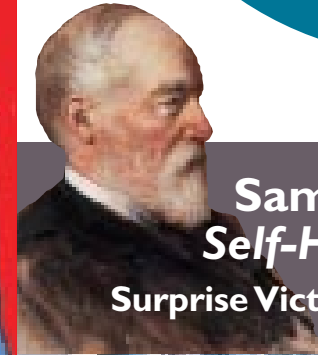


discover

ISSUE 8  
SPRING 2008

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

# nls



Samuel Smiles'  
*Self-Help* Heroes  
Surprise Victorian bestseller

The anonymous  
Carolina Oliphant  
A poet unveiled

The less fortunate  
duellist  
The cost of honour



# Top draw

Comics get serious

## Foreword



It's my great pleasure to be introducing this edition of *Discover NLS* in my capacity as Director of Development. Having been a reader and visitor over the years, it's now an honour to be leading development at the Library. NLS a truly inspiring organisation, and, as you can see, we are working very hard to develop the resources that will ensure that your National Library is one of the best in the world.

As ever, we bring you a diverse range of content. Our collections naturally contain a wealth of information on how social attitudes have changed and adapted down the ages. Historian Eric Graham turns his attentions to the business of duelling and the far-reaching repercussions it had for families in Georgian Scotland, with a tragic account of one of the last high-profile disputes to be settled in this way.

Hazel Cameron has been a driving force behind the Scottish poetry pamphlet scene for many years. She is no stranger to NLS, having been involved with the NLS-administered Callum Macdonald Memorial Award in recent years.

In this issue, she sets out to determine why the work of female poet and songwriter Carolina Oliphant has survived in our national memory far better than her name has.

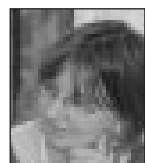
You might be forgiven for thinking that the rhetoric of self-improvement has its origins in 20th century America, but as John Murray Archive Curator, David McClay tells us, it was a humble railway manager from Victorian England who popularised the genre, with his 19th century bestseller *Self-Help*. Smiles and his idols are the subject of **Heroes**, an exhibition with the Scottish National Portrait Gallery opening next month.

Our spring exhibition opened on 8 April and looks at heroes of a different kind altogether. **Local Heroes: The Art of the Graphic Novel** shows how comics evolved in the last century into graphic novels worthy of serious critical attention. Legal Deposit Curator John Birch guides us round the subject with a passion and knowledge that hints at the growing academic interest in the art form.

Finally, I feel sure you will enjoy this issue of *Discover* and hope that it may even inspire you to support us in the future, and if so, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Teri Wishart  
Director of Development

## Contributors in this issue



**Hazel B Cameron** was born in Greenock in 1959, grew up in Bridge of Weir and moved to Perthshire where she lived for 25 years. She currently lives in North Yorkshire. Her stories, articles and poems have been published in magazines, anthologies and the web. Two of her poetry pamphlets were short-listed for the Callum Macdonald Memorial Award. She is the administrator of the Scottish Pamphlet Poetry website and recently became a full-time freelance writer.

**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*.



**David McClay** is John Murray Archive Curator. He has recently curated **Heroes: Nineteenth Century Self-Help Role Models**, the joint exhibition between NLS and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

**John Birch** is the Assistant Purchase Curator in the Purchase Team. He manages the Library's subscriptions and helps acquire modern foreign material. His interest in the graphic novel medium started at age 8 when a librarian frowned on him for repeatedly borrowing Asterix and Tintin adventures. He knew then that they must be good. He has been in the lucky position to watch the medium get even better and more diverse as he has got older.



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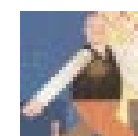
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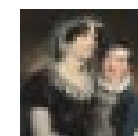


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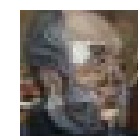
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### A word on Shelfmarks

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.

## A million feet of Scottish film now saved

Over one million feet of Scottish history on film has been saved for the nation by the Scottish Screen Archive. At the end of a three-year digitisation project, the archive has transferred 420 hours of original film to digital videotape. This means that 2,800 titles are available to the public for the first time.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project allowed the archive to set up a digital restoration facility, allowing staff to use cutting-edge techniques to restore damaged films. The first film to be completed using the new technology was *The Wedding of the 4th Marquess of Bute*, a private film made in 1905, believed to be one of the earliest wedding films.

You can watch around 1,000 film clips on the revamped Scottish Screen Archive website: [www.ssa.nls.uk](http://www.ssa.nls.uk). All the new titles are included in the online access catalogue, where you can browse a wide range of subjects, such as a ship launch in 1903, the young Gordon Brown campaigning to be Edinburgh University Rector and highlights of Scotland's 1967 win at Wembley.

A scene from *Tam Trauchle's Troubles*, 1934. This was a fundraising appeal film produced for the Glasgow Necessitous Children's Holiday Camp Fund.



## Murray Archive exhibition wins lighting award

The John Murray Archive exhibition at the National Library of Scotland has won a major UK award for lighting. At last week's Lighting Design Awards, NLS won in the Public Buildings category. Others shortlisted included London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

The award recognises the success of the cutting-edge technology used to bring 19th-century stories to life. The sophisticated lighting used responds to visitors in the exhibition. Each of the 11 display cases lights up as visitors approach, with spotlights illuminating specific items when people are reading them. In addition to its dramatic effect, this helps prevent potential damage to manuscripts by prolonged light exposure.

Glasgow-based designer Nich Smith created the interactive and carefully controlled lighting scheme. Judges commented that it plays 'a pivotal role in evoking atmosphere and drama in an exhibition of manuscripts and private letters.'

## Essential Shakespeare quartos archived

NLS has contributed to a project to produce a digital archive of rare Shakespeare quartos. The Shakespeare Quartos Archive project, led by the University of Oxford and the Folger Shakespeare Library in the USA, will create a high-resolution digital collection of the 75 pre-1641 quarto editions of William Shakespeare's plays. The scans will be complemented by a set of features that will aid scholarly research and detailed examination and comparison of the quartos. In the first phase of the project, digitised images of all 32 pre-1641 copies of *Hamlet* held by participating libraries will be given full-text transcription.

Shakespeare's earliest printed quarto editions provide essential information concerning the history of his plays. In the absence of surviving manuscripts, the quartos offer the closest known evidence of what Shakespeare might actually have written, and what appeared on the early modern English stage. Due to their rarity and fragility, the earliest quartos are often not accessible to those who need to study them. The Shakespeare Quartos Archive makes the earliest quartos freely available for in-depth study to students of Shakespeare worldwide.

## 19th-century Britain uncovered

An extensive archive of 19th century life has gone online. Gale Cengage Learning unveiled their latest digital archive, 19th-Century UK Periodicals (<http://gale.cengage.co.uk/ukperiodicals/>) at the Library in February. The first module of this resource, 'New Readerships: Women's, Children's, Humour and Leisure/Sport' provides an invaluable fully-searchable resource for those studying British life in the 19th century. Few of the items in this extensive online collection have ever been reissued since original publication.

'New readerships' contains 1.2 million pages of 19th-century periodicals, with roughly 40% of its content coming from NLS collections. Featured subjects and titles include: women's

writing, (Hearth and Home) and (Women's Penny Paper); satirical and comic titles, (Punch, Fun, Judy) and (Figaro); children's entertainment and education, e.g. (Boy's Own Paper) and (Good Words for the Young); and titles devoted to popular sports and hobbies, from gardening and horse racing to cricket, cycling and golf.

From *Little Folks: The Magazine for Boys and Girls*; *A Magazine for the Young*.



## JMA playwright in residence announced

Dramatist Peter Arnott has been appointed John Murray Archive playwright in residence. Glasgow-born Arnott has written over 25 plays, including *The Breathing House*, performed at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum in 2003, and winner of the TMA award for best new play performed in Britain. In 2007 he received a Creative Scotland Award from the Scottish Arts Council.

Already in the planning stages is an exciting collaboration between Peter, the Library and one of Scotland's leading theatre in education companies, TAG Theatre, based at the Citizens' in Glasgow. The major project of the residency will be a series of workshops and a play for schools, to tour in 2009, as part of the celebrations both of Darwin's bi-centenary and the 150th anniversary of the publication of the book itself.

The work will be inspired by the correspondence around the publication of Darwin's '*On the Origin of Species*', which Arnott describes as 'the most dangerous book ever written'. Peter is also planning public events in the Library itself, and to work with Library staff on the development of their own creative writing skills. Says Arnott: 'Even at first glance, the Archive is an Aladdin's cave. You fall over interesting items without even trying. It is a terrific starting point for exploring the issues around not just Darwin but every imaginable intellectual and social issue of the time. It's going to be a privilege having access to it.'



## Research project travels into the mind of explorers

A joint research project with Edinburgh University on the theme of travel and exploration has been given the go-ahead by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Correspondence: Exploration and Travel from Manuscript to Print, 1768-1848, the two-year project between NLS and the university's Institute of Geography and the Centre for the History of the Book, will make extensive use of the John Murray Archive.

The project will examine how explorers' correspondence becomes established historical and geographical 'fact'. The research will investigate how explorers wrote their accounts, who they were aimed at, how they built trust with their readers and also to what extent manuscript accounts were edited and adapted for publication.

Dr Innes Keighren, who recently completed his PhD on the historical geography of the book, will work full-time on this project over two years from March 2008. The project will hopefully culminate in a conference. Further details of the research as it progresses will follow on both organisations' websites.

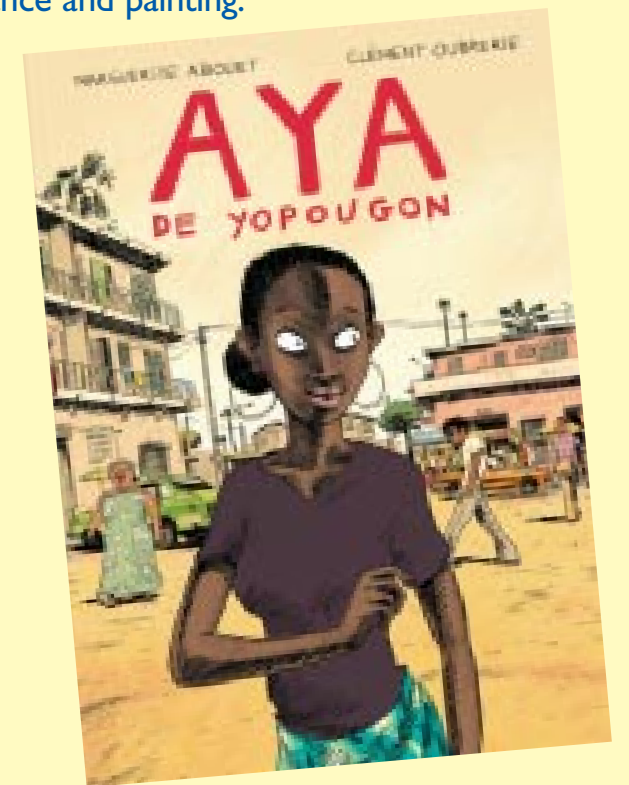
# Culture in

# the year 3794

Assistant Purchase Curator **John Birch** explains how graphic novels have evolved far beyond comic books aimed at children, and why the French regard the art form on a par with sculpture, dance and painting.

In 1967, Salvador Dali claimed that comics would be the culture of the year 3794. Dali might have been off the mark by a thousand years or so, and he didn't foresee the coming of graphic novels, but he did recognise the potential of the medium. That potential is now being explored by the ambition of writers and artists who wish to take comics beyond the perception of being a medium for children. They are taking the longer narrative form of the graphic novel closer to the prose novel. A growing body of graphic literature has been slowly building for the past 20 years. An increasing presence in reviews, literary criticism and university courses is raising the graphic novel's profile. The interest of other media such as film and television, as well as institutions such as art galleries and museums, is allowing those who may have once dismissed graphic novels to see them in a new light.

However, this Anglo-American phenomenon is only playing catch-up to the European appreciation of the medium. In France there isn't the same cultural baggage as the Anglo-American tradition. Since the 1960s critics and academics have heralded their *Bande Dessinée* as The Ninth Art (after Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Dance, Poetry, Film and Television). The Angoulême International Comics Festival, in Bordeaux, has become the main comic festival in Europe since it began in 1974. It has a reputation for highlighting new talent. The winners of their Prize for First Comic Book can now find themselves quickly translated and available to the Anglo-American market. The 2006 winner, *Aya de Yopougon* by Clément Oubrerie and Marguerite Abouet, is a romantic comedy following the heroine Aya and her teenage friends. Set in the peaceful Abidjan working-class neighbourhood of Yopougon on the



Cote d'Ivoire in 1970, it evokes a golden post-colonial era not usually associated with the clichés of Africa.

The French graphic album, or graphic novel, would initially have been conceived as a complete story arc before being serialised in one of the great French magazines like *Tintin*, *À Suivre*, *Métal Hurlant* or *Pilote*. It would have been collected together as it was originally intended, much like a Dickens novel in the Victorian age. The demise of these great French magazines has forced the medium to continue to evolve, and to include original narrative works in their own right. This is a trend that is also currently taking place in the Anglo-American arena, as sales of comics continue to fall, works of original graphic novels continue to rise. The popularity of titles such as *Throgal* →

Left: Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth by Chris Ware.

Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Ltd.

Right: Aya by Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie.

Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group Ltd.

can see a run of 30 albums with each one hitting sales of 200,000 plus.

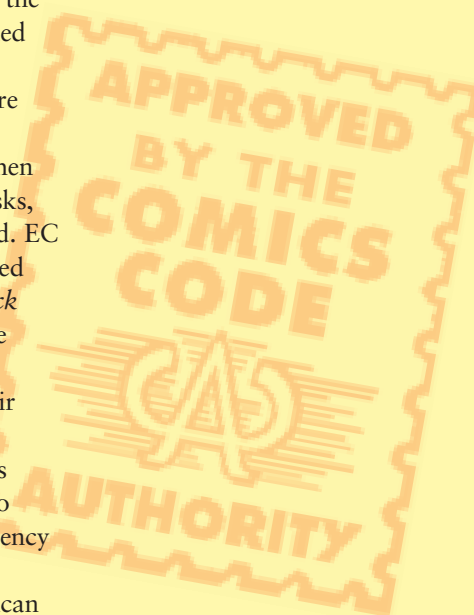
The earliest examples of British graphic novels produced by the publisher Titan, followed the French idea of collecting together serialised story arcs. Titan began by collecting together Judge Dredd strips and selling them through bookshops to reach a market that didn't usually read comics. A notable exception to this is *When the Wind Blows* (1982) by Raymond Briggs. This graphic novel, published by Penguin and later made into a successful animated film, satirised the government's advice about what to do in the event of a nuclear war. It showed the effects of a nuclear war on retired couple, Jim and Hilda Bloggs, as they tried to follow the precautions listed. It uses the medium to full effect with colourful smaller panels depicting the Bloggs' home life, contrasted with the stark giant panels of the nuclear war machine in action. Their helplessness is also given pathos as the sickly hues of nuclear fall-out takes its toll on their faces, still full of belief that the government will come to help them soon.

Although the term graphic novel had been coined in 1964, by American Richard Kyle, to describe the longer narrative form of European graphic albums, the American graphic novel did not begin until 1978. *A Contract with God* by Will Eisner was the first title to self-consciously call itself a 'graphic novel' and deliberately separate itself from the juvenile connotations of the word 'comic.' *Sabre* by Don McGregor and Paul Gulacy, also published in 1978, described itself on the credits page as a comic novel, though the author would call it a graphic album in interviews.

Why did it take the Anglo-Americans two decades to catch up with the French? The answer lies in the McCarthy era of America. Just like rock 'n'roll, comic books were blamed as a cause of juvenile delinquency in the 1950s. Dr Frederick Wertham was a German-American psychiatrist who, while working with juvenile offenders, noticed that a lot of them read comic books. He concluded that comics were contributing factors to children committing crime and violence. Dr Wertham attacked, with articles such as *Horror in the Nursery* and *The Psychopathology of Comic Books*. Worried parents gave them credence even though these articles were criticised as being unsubstantiated by any valid research. Dr Wertham continued his attack with the publication of *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954. In it he claimed that Batman and Wonder Woman were gay and warned that comics contained hidden and overt sexual images. He gave graphic examples of how these books depicted sex, crime, murder, sadism and drugs.

Afraid of the U.S. Congressional Inquiry into comics, the American comic book publishers established the Comics Code Authority in 1954. They pre-empted censorship by introducing the Comics Code to ensure respect for established authority and banning depictions of sexual perversion and excessive violence. Titles were only granted distribution once they had the Comics Code seal of approval. In an age when comics were sold in street-corner street kiosks, this killed the crime and horror market dead. EC Comics was forced out of business and closed titles such as *Tales from the Crypt* and *Shock SuspenStories*, to concentrate on a magazine called *Mad*. Superhero comics survived by purposefully keeping adult themes from their pages.

In the UK, the Reverend Marcus Morris created *The Eagle* (1950) and *Girl* (1951) to combat what he saw as the juvenile delinquency of American comics. However, in austere postwar Britain there were not many American comic titles available (some arrived as ballast in ships crossing the Atlantic). Still, the National Union of Teachers began a campaign in 1952 against comics and the Comics Campaign Council was formed in 1953 calling for censorship. Even though the Children's Department of the Home Office contended that there was little evidence to prove crime was committed under the influence of comics, the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act was passed in 1955. Comics had been told that they weren't for adults and this has calcified into the belief that comics were only for children. →

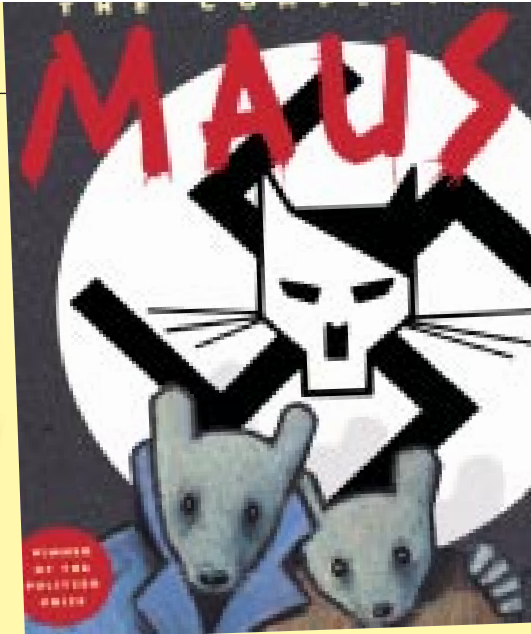


Works bearing the stamp of the Comics Codes Authority were the only ones to avoid censorship in 1950s America.

Right: *The Complete Maus* by Art Spiegelman.

Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

Below: *Girl* and *The Eagle*, were part of a British effort to sanitise comics aimed at children.



The belief that comics were only for children would later be undermined by the Underground Comix scene in late 1960s San Francisco. *Zap Comix* by Robert Crumb and the *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* by Gilbert Shelton would reflect the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll era that encouraged everyone to 'turn on, tune in and drop out.' The need to seek approval from the Comics Code Authority for distribution would be challenged in the early 1980s by creator-owned alternative comics such as *Elfquest*, *RAW*, *Love & Rockets* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. They helped create a self-publishing boom that took advantage of the direct sales market of independent comic shops. It was these grassroot attempts at producing innovative comics separate from the mainstream distribution that helped create a demand for a more sophisticated form of the comic medium.

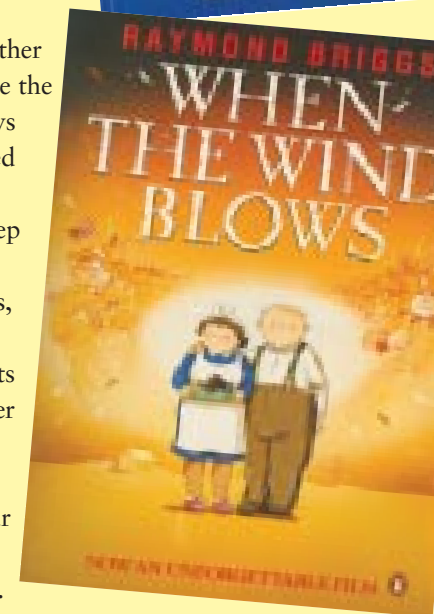
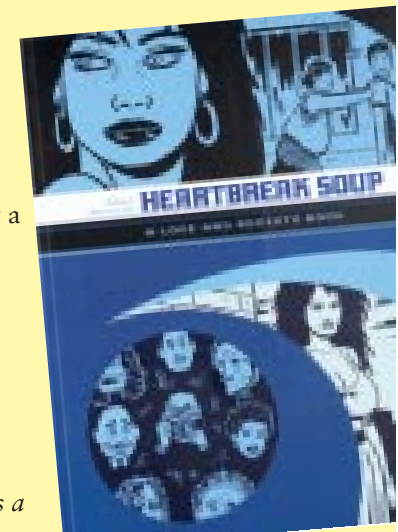
That demand was met in 1986 by three titles that provided the fledgling graphic novel market with the profile it needed. *The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller (of Sin City fame) took Batman back to his dark and psychologically flawed vigilante roots. *Watchmen* by Alan Moore & Dave Gibbons, is a highly structured, multi-layered narrative which questions the accountability of superheroes as the United States heads towards a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. *Maus* by Art Spiegelman tells the story of his father's struggle to survive the Auschwitz concentration camp as a Polish Jew and his own troubled relationship with his father. Using Nazi ideology and propaganda of degenerate art, it depicts the Jews as mice and the Germans as cats. The media gave these works unprecedented attention due to their revolutionary techniques and their social and political relevance. They have become some of the best-selling graphic novels of all time and helped spark the first wave of serious interest in comics.

The second wave of interest in graphic novels such as *Jimmy Corrigan, the Smartest Kid on Earth* (Guardian First Book Award 2001) and *Persepolis* (Angoulême Prize for First Comic Book 2001) by Marjane Satrapi has led publishers to market titles aimed specifically at a mature audience. Jonathan Cape, Pantheon, Fantagraphics, First Second and Drawn & Quarterly publish works in a diverse range of subjects, styles and titles. Yet it is ironic that some of the best of the new wave of graphic novels deal with issues of identity while the graphic novel is still carving out its own. *Fun Home*, *Lost Girls*, *American Born Chinese*, *It's a Bird*, *Epileptic*, and *Alice in Sunderland* all address fundamental issues of identity, whether it is sexuality, race, family or history. All use the graphic novel in unique and interesting ways and push the boundaries of what is expected of the medium.

The graphic novel is the natural next step in the evolution of comics. It has gone from single panel, to comic strips, to comic books, to single unified works. It can offer greater freedom to artists as there are few precedents and no strict canon to adhere to. It can cover titles like *Fox Bunny Funny* which is wordless; to the text-heavy works of Alan Moore. It can use various art styles like clear line, watercolours, pastels, black & white, fully painted or computer-generated images. The innovative use of typography can reflect, enhance, deepen and give visual clues to the meanings of the words used. It can play with literature, genre, modernism, post-modernism- whatever matches the needs of the story, the writer or the artist. Dali may have been right to say comics will be the culture of the year 3794 but it is a better bet to say the 21st century will be good to the graphic novel. If you had a negative perception of graphic novels before you read this article, ask yourself where you got that perception. Then rip it up and put it in the bin. You shouldn't let second-hand perceptions hold you back from some great reading. nls

#### Discover more

You can see all of the titles mentioned, and many more from the Library's collections along with some original artwork and interactive elements, at our exhibition, **Local heroes: The Art of the Graphic Novel**, which opens at NLS on Friday 4 April and runs until 1 June.



Top: *Heartbreak Soup* Love & Rockets © Fantagraphics Books 2008. Individual stories are © Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez.

Courtesy of Titan Books.

Bottom: *When the Wind Blows* by Raymond Briggs (Hamish Hamilton, 1982) copyright (c) Raymond Briggs, 1982.

Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

# Pressing ahead in 2008

Programme Manager **Helen Williams** outlines the wide range of national activities planned to celebrate 500 years of printing in Scotland.

Printing is one of Scotland's oldest surviving industries. It began in 1507 when James IV granted the first royal licence for printing in Scotland to Walter Chepman, an Edinburgh merchant, and his business partner Andrew Myllar, a bookseller. The licence was put on display by the National Archives of Scotland in September 2007, the first event of many to mark half a millennium of printing in Scotland. The earliest surviving book from Chepman and Myllar's press with a definite date is John Lydgate's poem *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, which was printed on 4 April 1508 on the press set up on what is now Edinburgh's Cowgate.

This year sees the Library joining forces with the Scottish Printing Archival Trust and the Scottish Print Employers Federation to celebrate Scotland's printed heritage in all its forms, and to showcase contemporary Scottish print. During 2008, it will be possible to see everything from works from the press of Chepman and Myllar, to a modern-day printing press and new artworks inspired by Scotland's print culture.

Events and exhibitions are taking place all over Scotland from Dumfries to Shetland, from Elgin to Galashiels, and of course, in the National Library of Scotland itself. These exhibitions show the depth and range of Scotland's local printing industries. For example, the exhibits at the Gateway Galleries in St Andrews in the autumn will range from the first book printed in the town in 1552, to the products of a contemporary private press. A year-long exhibition entitled *Local word and image* opened in November 2007 in Aberdeen's Provost Skene's House, tracing the development of printing in the city from 1622, when Edward Raban was appointed Aberdeen's first printer, through the publication of the first newspaper in Scotland and into the 19th century when Aberdeen was a major printing centre. At the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock, the exhibition on local printing not only covers books and newspapers but also the local calico printing

industry. Also at the Institute, a newly-built working replica of the printing press used by publisher John Wilson to print the first edition (known as the Kilmarnock Edition) of Robert Burns' poetry in 1786, will be unveiled this July. Meanwhile, Gaelic printing will be highlighted at an exhibition at Inverness Library. Local History Week takes place as usual this month, and this year's theme, 'Hot metal and cold print', looks at printing and newspapers.

The anniversary celebrations cover a huge range of activities. In the Borders alone for example, the council's Museum and Galleries Service is staging a touring exhibition on the history of printing in the local area, with associated events and educational activities.



The logo of Scotland's first printing press, owned by Chepman and Myllar.



Meanwhile Abbotsford House will offer a changing display of early and rare Scottish imprints from Sir Walter Scott's library. The National Trust for Scotland's printing workshop in Innerleithen, Robert Smail's, is staging Victorian living history tours. These allow visitors to apply to take up an apprenticeship here and view 'the works' as it would have been in Victorian times.

Not all of the celebrations take the form of exhibitions: printing will be a major theme for Doors Open Days during September. The birth of print in Scotland was marked on 4 April when a commemorative plaque was unveiled on the Cowgate near the original premises of Chepman and Myllar's press while a mobile modern press printed souvenir posters for the public in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Also that week, printmakers at the Visual Research Centre at Dundee Contemporary Arts held a public day of printing, producing a printed art work to form the backdrop to a public reading of John Lydgate's poem.

Other hands-on activities include a course at Glasgow Women's Library where you can learn how to design and print your own personal bookplate, and various demonstrations of printing techniques that will take place alongside exhibitions and also in private presses in Edinburgh (the Chepman & Myllar press) and Coupar, Angus (Press Here). The role of print as an art-form will also play a part in the celebrations with themed events along these lines taking place at Edinburgh Printmakers, the Glasgow School of Art and Gracefield Arts Centre in Dumfries.

There will also be websites highlighting various aspects of Scottish printing, including one on the Library's website which shows the geographical spread of printing across Scotland, with full text facsimiles from 33 of Scotland's first printing presses. Also available electronically is a special DVD, created by the Scottish Text Society and NLS, containing a complete electronic version of prints from Chepman & Myllar's press. New books on the subject include the final volumes of Edinburgh University Press' *A History of the Book in Scotland* and the Library's own book, Antony Kamm's *Scottish Printed Books 1508-2008*. This publication, published in partnership with Sandstone Press, is a fascinating souvenir to accompany the Library's own summer exhibition *Imprentit: 500 Years of the Scottish Printed Word*, on which there will be a more detailed article in the next issue.

Whatever your interest, we hope that you will join us in celebrating a momentous half-millennium of Scottish print and as well as in looking forward to a vibrant and exciting future for Scotland in print. **nls**

## Discover more

A full list of events can be found on the project website: [www.500yearsofprinting.org](http://www.500yearsofprinting.org) or from the Programme Manager, 500 Years of Printing in Scotland, 48 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5DE.

Telephone: 0131 220 4353.

Email: [hwilliams@500yearsofprinting.org](mailto:hwilliams@500yearsofprinting.org)

# Worthy SKAMM for Screen Archive

Education and Outreach Officer  
**Ruth Washbrook** reports on a  
Scottish Screen Archive project aimed  
at training and developing young  
filmmaking talent in Scotland.

**R**esearched, filmed, directed and edited by a group of young people affectionately known as the SKAMMers, *Fleapits, Jam Jars and Cushions on Seats* is the culmination of a year-long project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The film premiered at the Filmhouse in Edinburgh on 18 December and received rapturous applause and praise.

Scottish Kids are Making Movies (SKAMM) was set up with the aim of providing opportunities for budding young filmmakers aged 13–18 to train with a filmmaker and learn hands-on production skills.

The project brief had the SKAMMers researching the topic of cinema going and involved the intrepid team investigating whether going to the movies in the past was more of an experience than today. What conclusions did they reach? →



Above: Children queue to see *Treasure Island* in 1935.

Below left: The interior of MacIndoe's Cinematograph Booth visited by Lord and Lady Overtoun in 1908.

Below right: Queues for the ABC Minor's Matinee during the 1960s.

SKAMM is managed by its Artistic Director, Beverley Nicolson, who is also Education and Events Co-ordinator at the Filmhouse in Edinburgh. Originally set up by Mark Cousins and Shiona Wood in 1993, the charity's aims are to nurture the talent of teenage filmmakers through innovation and imagination.

Under the guidance of filmmaker and producer Sandie Jamieson, the group embarked upon the project with help from partners, The Living Memory Association (LMA) and the Scottish Screen Archive. The Archive was involved with the project from the outset and I had great fun trawling through our catalogues and vaults to find films which reflected the experience of Scottish cinema going through the ages. And there are plenty... from the very beginning of public film shows at the travelling cinematograph booths as featured in *Lord and Lady Overtoun* (1908) to children queuing to see *Treasure Island* at the Playhouse Inverness (1935) to the ABC Minors Matinees of the 1960s.

Key to our understanding of the cinematic experience are the local topical or actuality films

often made by the local cinema manager as a way of encouraging larger audiences to his picture house. These local films recorded faces in crowds with the premise of encouraging people to see themselves on the big screen before the main feature. The films which recorded local events such as gala days, sporting activities and news stories are a unique slice of social history. With the emphasis of the films focusing on capturing faces in crowds, we are privileged to experience the emotions and reactions of the people in real time, watching them smile, laugh, glower or wave as the camera passes them by.

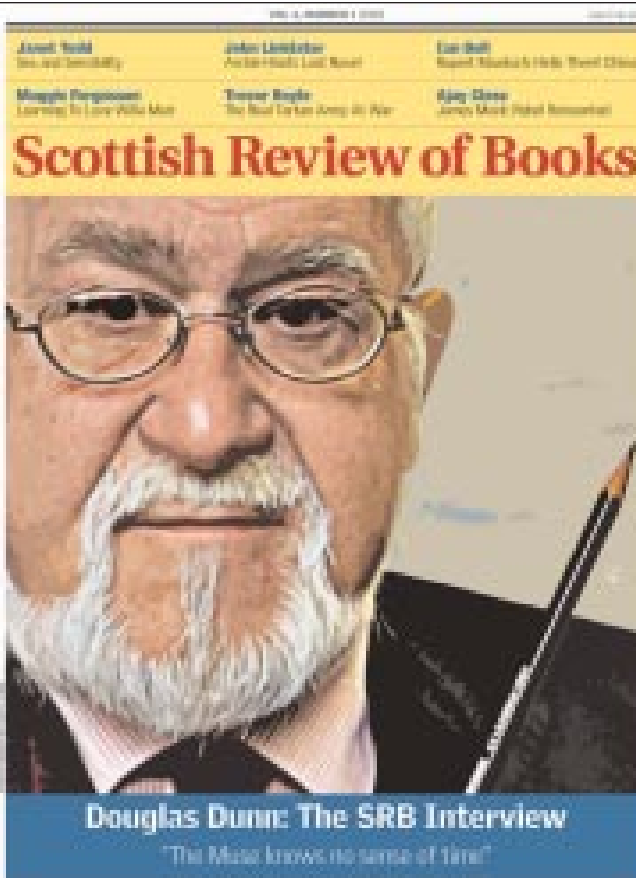
*Fleapits, Jam Jars and Cushions on Seats* features a tour around the Scottish Screen Archive and includes myself and LMA volunteer George Hackland, being interviewed by intrepid reporter Julian Joseph about cinema going in the past.

The film is dedicated to the memory of Shiona Wood, co-founder of SKAMM who died in 2006 and it is thanks to her hard work and effort that the SKAMM project exists and continues to nurture young talent. I'm sure she would have been very proud of the skills and enthusiasm which have emerged and been developed, thanks to the project. To recognise the exceptional participation and skills, several young people were awarded a 'Shiona Diploma' for outstanding contributions in particular areas. If these young filmmakers go on to become the filmmakers of the future, there is a lot to look forward to.

*Fleapits, Jam Jars and Cushions on Seats* features live action, interviews, archive footage and photographs and is an amusing, informative and very entertaining piece of filmmaking. **nls**

For more information about SKAMM and *Fleapits, Jam Jars and Cushions on Seats*, contact Beverley Nicolson at The Filmhouse on: [beverleyn@filmhousecinema.com](mailto:beverleyn@filmhousecinema.com) or **0131 623 8031**.





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## High performance database


**Carolyn McAllistair** reports on how a database that makes use of 'cataloguing shorthand' has helped the Library provide fast access to thousands of Scottish theatre programmes.

The Library's Cataloguing Standards and Maintenance Team recently completed a project to add the Library's holdings of Scottish theatre programmes to a dedicated database. The Scottish Theatre Programmes database replaces a set of hard copy binders with a set of records that are searchable by title of show, name of company, and year of performance. Users can also browse the database by show title or venue, to find details of over 7,000 programmes, flyers and posters from more than 250 venues.

The Scottish repertory theatres (the Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh, Citizens Theatre, Glasgow and Dundee Rep) are particularly well represented, but the collection also covers a wide range of shows and concerts held at village halls and many of Scotland's most prestigious theatres. The programmes are interesting as a record of Scottish theatre from the 19th century to the present day of course, but they also provide a fascinating source of social history through the local and national advertising they carried. The Library will shortly be adding 19th-century playbills, posters and programmes from the Weir special collection to the database, while new material received by legal deposit or donation, including publications from Scotland's recently established National Theatre, will also be added when it is received.

Recording and providing access to large volumes of ephemeral material (publications intended to have a short period of currency, such as election leaflets or publicity materials) represents a challenge for a legal deposit library receiving a large number of items each week. Because producing full catalogue records is complex and time consuming, much cataloguing now involves sharing records created by other libraries which are checked, corrected and added to, according to local needs. Few, if any, other libraries will have created full catalogue records for these kinds of publications. Initiatives like the Scottish Theatre Programmes database provide a solution by recording the key information users need to identify the items in brief records. We don't, for example, record publication details or physical details like size and number of pages.

We also need to provide links between the Scottish Theatre Programmes database and the main NLS online catalogue, which readers rely on as the principal means of accessing our collections, and they expect it to be comprehensive. In the records in the main catalogue, instead of describing the individual programme for a particular show, we describe all our programmes for a particular theatre or venue as a collection. Headings include 'theater programs' (the American spelling) and the name of the venue. Each catalogue record contains a click-through link to the database, where readers can view the full inventory for the collection.

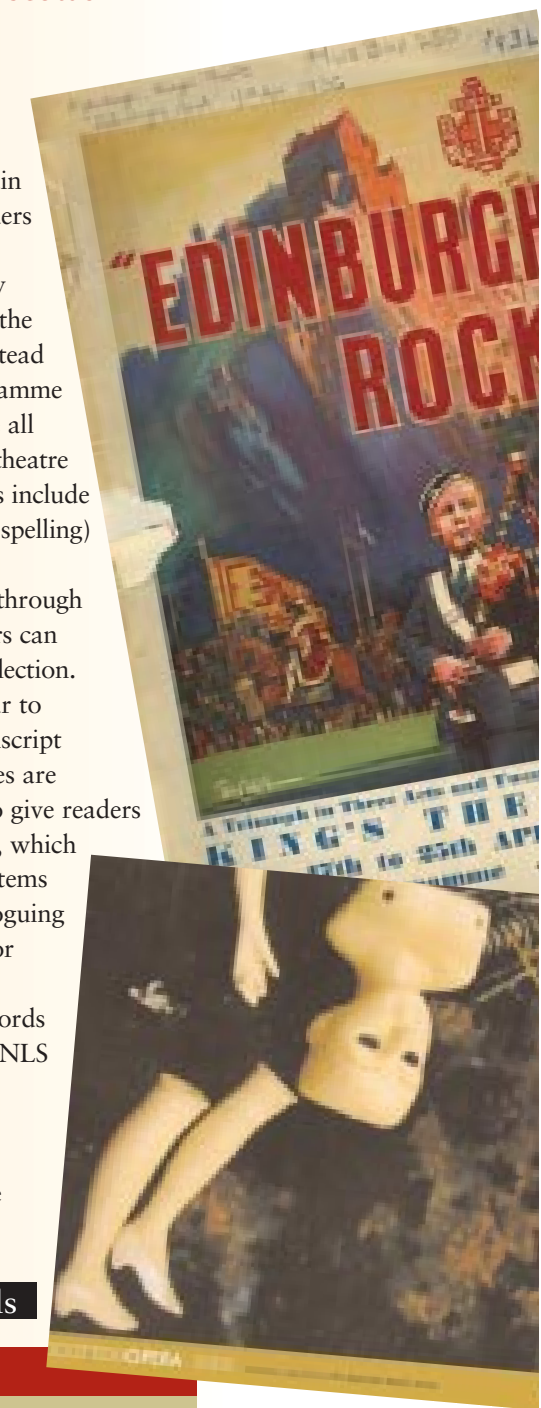
This approach will be familiar to professionals working with manuscript material and archives, but libraries are increasingly adopting it as way to give readers access to collections of ephemera, which often contain a large number of items which do not fit easily into cataloguing rules and conventions designed for books. We have plans to create a similar database with links to records in the main catalogue to provide NLS users with more details of our holdings of Scottish football programmes. These new ways of working will hopefully help more readers to filter our extensive collections to find those specific items that catch their interest. 

#### Discover more

Scottish Theatre Programmes database home page:  
<http://www.nls.uk/collections/british/theatres/index.cfm>

More information on the Scottish Theatre Programmes collection:  
[http://www.nls.uk/collections/british/scottish\\_theatres\\_database.html](http://www.nls.uk/collections/british/scottish_theatres_database.html)

Digital images of playbills from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh:  
<http://www.nls.uk/playbills/index.html>



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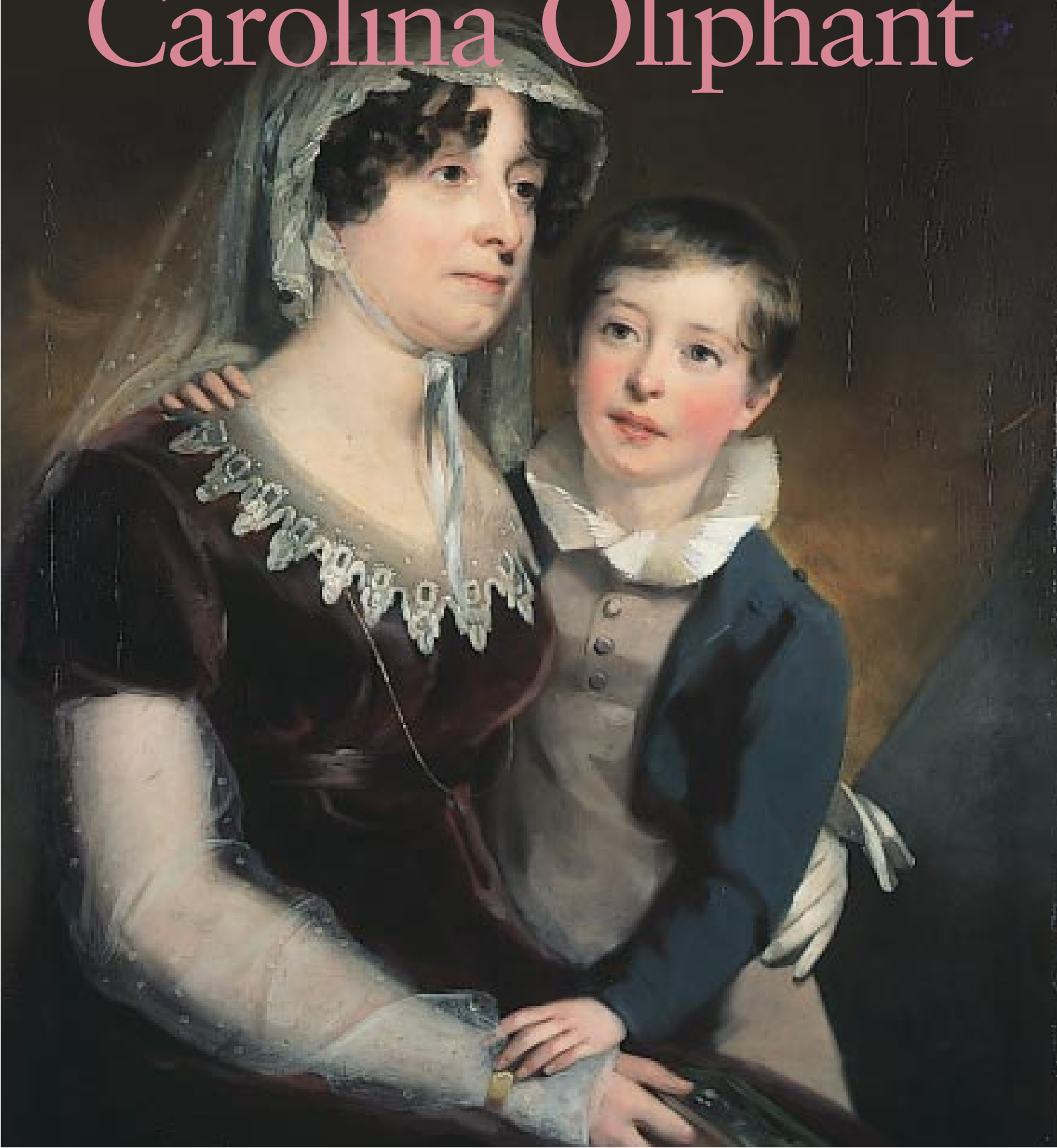
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Poet **Hazel Cameron** admires the work of the Burns contemporary and balladeer, but questions her refusal to stand up and be counted as a woman of letters.

# The anonymous Carolina Oliphant

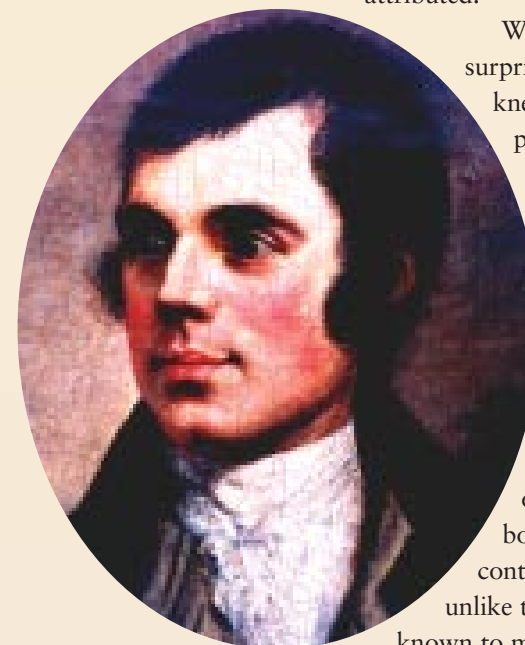


Left: Carolina Oliphant, Baroness Nairne, by John Watson Gordon. Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Above: Robert Burns by Alexander Nasmyth. Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

On a recent Radio 4 broadcast of *Desert Island Discs*, I heard Rory Stewart, an author and former Deputy Governor in Iraq, choose *The Laird o Cockpen* as his first disc. He said it brought back fond memories of hearing his father and other family members sing this song. Rory is 35 and was born in Hong Kong, yet his choice of one of Carolina Oliphant's many songs shows how enduring and popular her work is, even if her name is not.

I first came across the name Carolina Oliphant, or Lady Nairne as she was later to become, when I was secretary on the Gask Estate in Perthshire, where this mysterious lady poet was buried. Then in 2000, I came across a copy of *The Life and Songs of Lady Nairne* by the Rev. Charles Rogers, published in 1869 by Charles Griffin & Co.<sup>1</sup> The book includes a biography of Carolina along with songs and poems which were known to have been written by her or were later attributed.



When I read the book, I was surprised to discover that I already knew many of her songs and poems. I was particularly astonished to see she was the author of *The Rowan Tree*. I knew this song well from my childhood; our back garden had been graced with eight mature rowan trees and that song was often sung by my parents and friends at local events or parties. We had several books on Burns and Scott: both contemporaries of Carolina, yet unlike their names hers was not known to me. I asked my mother if she knew who had written *The Rowan Tree* and she was surprised to discover it was Carolina Oliphant: she had never heard of her either but she remembered the words of her song:

Oh! Rowan Tree, Oh! Rowan Tree,  
thou'll aye be dear to me,  
Intwin'd thou art wi' mony ties  
o' hame and infancy.

Other songs such as *Charlie is my Darling*; *The Hundred Pipers*; *Will ye no Come back again?*; *The Pentland Hills*; *The land o' the Leal*; and as mentioned above *The Laird o Cockpen*, we both knew well, yet not the name Carolina Oliphant. I wondered why not, and made it my task to find out.

Carolina was born at Gask in 1766. When young, she wrote and sang her work openly, but by the time she was married and had become Lady Nairne, she was distributing her work under the pseudonym Mrs Bogan of Bogan, or writing it anonymously. In those days writing was not seen as an acceptable pastime for a woman in her position. This surprised me, as this attitude had been reversed over the following hundred or so years. In fact I wrote in secret myself for many years because I believed I did not have *enough* status to be a writer. This reversal of society's attitude to women writers began while Carolina was alive.

Carolina was born into a strong Jacobite family. Her parents had married at Versailles in 1755 during 19 years of political exile following the failure of the Jacobite rising of 1745. She was named after Prince Charles Edward Stewart (Carolina being the female version of Charles) and much of her early work was inspired by stories and traditions of the Jacobite cause, *Will ye no come back again?* and *Charlie is my Darling*, being good examples. When she was 18, her brother Charles wrote of her: 'Carolina is just now playing, "my wife's lying sick, I wish she ne'er may rise again, I'll put on my tartan trews and court another wife again" it is a very good tune...' <sup>2</sup>. This displayed a fun and frivolous side to her writing and was in keeping with the strong traditions of Scottish ballad and song writing throughout all tiers of Scottish society at that time. But the days of this free song culture were to pass when the evangelical revival took hold at the end of the 18th century. Carolina was strongly influenced by this revival. Later in life, she lamented about Burns 'that one endowed with so much genius should have composed verses which tended to inflame the passions'. Her high spirits seem to have been tempered, yet not completely, as she continued to write, albeit anonymously. →

I felt disappointment that she conceded to the view that writing by men held more importance than women's writing. She wrote in a letter to a friend '...the more mystery the better, and still the balance is in favour of 'the lords of creation' I cannot help in some degree undervaluing beforehand what is said to be a feminine production.' She felt it important that the publisher of her work, Robert Purdie, did not only keep her identity secret, but also kept hidden that her poems and songs were the work of a woman.

In 1908, over 60 years after Lady Nairne's death, Henry Grey Graham published the book *Scottish Men of Letters of the Eighteenth Century* and includes one chapter entitled 'Women of Letters' which he refers to in the preface: 'An apology perhaps should be made for entitling one Chapter Women of Letters, for strictly speaking it describes women who were not literary persons, like their learned sisters in England. Their whole output consisted of one or two songs... An apology is certainly due to the shades of those high-born dames for bringing them into the company of men who wrote for vulgar fame or money; seeing that their life-long anxiety was to conceal from the public the fact that they had ever written a line or composed a verse'. In this, Graham appears to state that women in Scotland did not expect financial reward or recognition for their writing. He then went on to mention Lady Nairne and her writings. A reviewer of Graham's book commented: "That Lady Nairne wrote *Will ye no come back again* is news to us: and if she wrote *Charlie is my Darling*, which form of the words is hers?"<sup>3</sup> I suspect there will be many who, on reading this, will express similar surprise. It was only after her death in a posthumous volume *Leys from Strathearn* (1846) that it was acknowledged she was the author of many favourite songs.

Disputes will no doubt remain as it is difficult to attribute anonymous work from that period: it was

also common in those days for poets to bowdlerise each other's work. Carolina showed a keen interest in the work of Burns and produced a bowdlerised version of *The Ploughman* for her brother to sing to his tenants at the annual dinner.<sup>4</sup> Poems and songs were more frequently collaborations; Carolina met Neil Gow and is known to have written several songs to accompany airs written by his talented son, Neil Gow Jnr. Her authorship of *The Land o the Leal* caused controversy for years, a rather enraged 128 page book *The land o' the Leal irrefutably proved ... to be the deathbed valediction of Robert Burns* was written by Alexander Crichton of Burrelton in 1919, refuting Lady Nairne's authorship and attributing the poem to Burns. However, the final general consensus seems to be with Lady Nairne.

From my own point of view, I have mixed feelings about her anonymity. She was in a position where she could have argued on behalf of women writers and perhaps helped the circumstances of those who did not have the financial security she had. Instead she seemed to see anonymity as a game and an amusement. However, there is no doubt that Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne and finally Baroness Nairne as she became on the death of her only son, contributed a huge wealth to the Scottish ballad and song tradition and she should certainly be recognised for that. I suppose the fact that my mother did not know her name but knew her songs implies that they had been passed down the line from those years of anonymity in the traditional manner; word of mouth, rather than having been taught them by the academia that for many years asserted a stranglehold over most writing within Scotland. nls

#### Discover more

1. *Life and songs of the Baroness Nairne*, Charles Rogers.

↓ Shelfmark: NG.1169.j.20

2. *Oxford Notes & Queries*

3. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

#### Sources

Some of Oliphant's anonymous work can be found in *Scottish Songs by Robert Chambers*.

↓ Shelfmark: Glen.105,105a

Her letters and journals can also be found in the Library's manuscript collections. Shelfmarks:

↓ Correspondence : MS.980, 1763-1876.

↓ Journals MS.981A (f1-185), 1789-1823: MS.981B

↓ (f186-468), 1830-1841: MS.981C (f469-683), c1836-1845.

## Navigating the full-text

In the latest in the series covering the Library's digital collections, **Paul Cunnea** explores some of our full-text journal titles.

#### Hidden depths: Oxford Journals Online

This is a major journal collection of 196 high quality academic and research titles from Oxford University Press. A wide range of subject areas are covered, including medicine and mathematics, humanities and physical sciences, law and the social sciences. In addition to the breadth of subject coverage, the depth of the collections goes back to 1849, with over 3 million pages of articles in the archive alone.

To complement the historic archive, current content is often online, weeks before the print issue is available. There are a number of alerting services to choose from to keep you up-to-date with the latest research – from table of contents alerts, RSS feeds, PDA alerts, and citation tracking, which tracks citations to articles, authors or topics of your choice.

#### Surfing the current: WilsonWeb's Science Full Text Select

WilsonWeb's Science Full Text Select consists of over 360 journals across the broad spectrum of science and technology. Less research orientated than Oxford Journals (although peer-reviewed titles are included) this collection complements our comprehensive British printed collections with its depth of US publishers and international scope.

This science collection is dedicated to current articles, with full-text content covering the last five years or so. While suitable for practising scientists and engineers, many journals are aimed

at the non-specialist too. This makes the database especially useful for anyone curious to learn more about scientific or technological issues at a general level.

#### Orienteering in the humanities: Blackwell Compass Journals

Blackwell Compass Journals is a smaller and relatively new collection, with the content of each title only available online. Each title focuses on a distinct discipline, and publishes around 100 peer-reviewed survey articles each year. Aimed at researchers, teaching staff, and students looking for articles that provide overviews of current research in their area, they are also ideal starting points for anyone who needs a quick entry into a new field of research. The survey nature helps to identify trends and developments in a field, and also provides fresh thinking on key issues.

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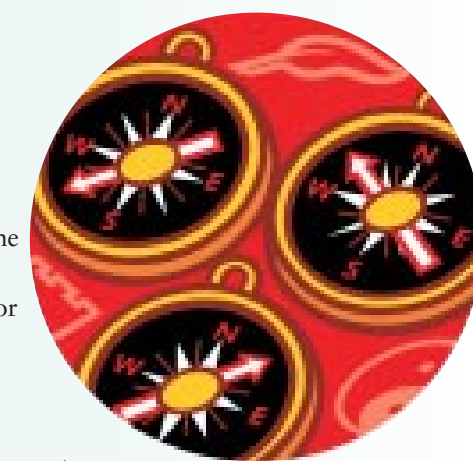
**Literature Compass**, which aims to cover the full range of English literature, and plays an active role in fostering research that spans genres and periods.

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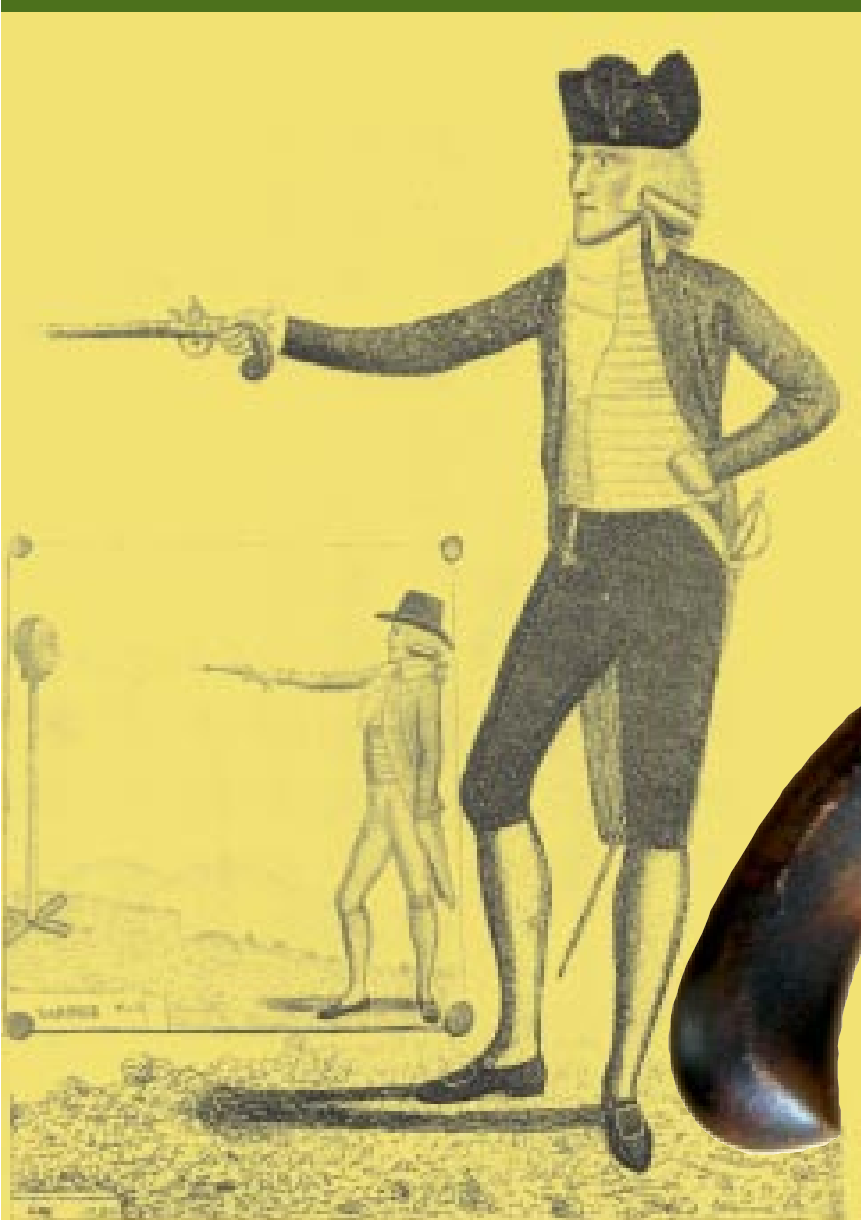
We plan to offer remote access to these journals, and to extend the journal collections in the coming year. In the meantime, you can access these collections from the Library's reading rooms, via our new trial search service.

Three quite different journal collections, with different strengths, depths and currency - we hope you will enjoy surfing, diving and navigating through the landscape of knowledge that they offer – please let us know if you do!



Dr Eric Graham unearths rare contemporary accounts of the tragic circumstances surrounding a duel that shook Georgian Scotland.

# The less fortunate duellist



Left: John Kay's sketch, 'The fortunate duellist' satirised Macrae's behaviour.

Right: Homain's estate, Dumfrieshire.

Just after midday on a bleak, wintry April Sunday in 1790, two well-known Edinburgh socialites took up their duelling pistols on the links of Musselburgh. With the last attempts to resolve their grievance exhausted, they faced each other twelve paces apart. On the word of a 'second' they fired together. Sir George Ramsay of Banff's shot passed through the cape of the coat of his adversary, Captain James Macrae of Holmains, grazing his cheek. Macrae's ball, on the other hand, found its mark and Sir George instantly collapsed. As the two men had once been friends, the victor, in a sudden wave of anguish, rushed to the fallen man only to be prevailed upon to quit the field immediately to avoid arrest.

The grievously wounded man was lifted into his carriage, but the journey back to Edinburgh proved too gruelling for Sir George who succumbed to his injury two days later. Criminal letters were soon served on Captain Macrae on behalf of the widow Ramsay and her brother-in-law. They summoned Macrae to appear before the High Court of Justiciary in Edinburgh on 26 July to answer a charge of culpable murder.<sup>1</sup>

The chain of events leading to this fatal duel began four days earlier when the haughty Macrae, a dedicated theatregoer and amateur thespian, was 'handing' a young lady from her box in the Theatre Royal onto the teeming pavement of Princes Street after a performance.<sup>2</sup> The arrogant but ever chivalrous ex-military captain signalled to the pole men of a seemingly vacant sedan chair to come alongside. At which point a manservant pushed through the crowd and laid hands on one of the poles, claiming the chair for his mistress. Macrae immediately used his swagger cane to rap the insolent fellow's knuckles.

There then followed an exchange of insults (the news of the French Revolution having emboldened the radical elements of the lower classes) whereupon Macrae set about the man with his stick, drawing blood.<sup>3</sup>

Macrae's temper only cooled when he was informed that the manservant he had severely beaten was in the service of the wife of Sir George Ramsay, a well-to-do family he was socially acquainted with. To retrieve the situation, Macrae decided to call on Sir George the following day. The Baronet expressed complete disinterest in the affair, pronouncing that, as it involved a servant recently hired by his wife, it had nothing to do with him. Macrae then tracked down Lady Ramsay to the house of the aspiring portrait artist Henry Raeburn where he made a qualified apology. She chose to make light of the whole incident and so the matter seemed resolved.

Macrae's temper soon re-ignited however, when he heard that a witness had openly decried Macrae's violent behaviour as 'ungentlemanly'. Much to Macrae's chagrin, this gentleman could not be traced and so he placed a notice in the newspaper denouncing his elusive critic as a 'liar and a scoundrel' and demanded satisfaction.

This only served to give away his address to the disgruntled lower classes of Edinburgh. The following day he received an anonymous letter on behalf of 'a Fraternity of 107 servants' which branded him 'a damned scoundrel and a Cowardly Puppy'.

Macrae's wrath turned incandescent the next day when he was served by a Sheriff Court writ from the manservant John Merry for grievous assault. Macrae jumped to the conclusion that Sir George had put the servant up to it. He immediately fired off a letter demanding that Merry be 'turned off' (dismissed). Sir George curtly wrote

back that he would do no such thing. The exchange of letters that followed only served to stiffen the resolve of both not to give way.

Disaster struck when a heated exchange erupted between Sir George and an envoy Macrae had sent to his house. The young 'blade' Captain Thomas Amory inflamed the situation by telling Sir George that Macrae considered him 'not a gentlemen but a scoundrel' for not redeeming the slur on Macrae's character by ordering the servant to drop his legal action.

And so the duel was fought the following day, despite protracted negotiations by wiser counsel in both camps. At the time Georgian society was both shocked and mesmerised by this calamitous event.

The celebrated Edinburgh caricaturist John Kay sketched Macrae practising with his pistol, with the sardonic title 'the Fortunate Duellist'.<sup>4</sup> The *Scots Magazine* reported fully on the sensational events leading up to the duel - as did the local newspapers. All respected the fact that both men took to the field holding a genuine grievance that invoked 'a matter of honour'. Most noted, however, that Macrae, as a former officer in the Irish Carabineers, was a renowned expert shot against whom Sir George had little chance. A number mused over Macrae's lack of breeding as the principal cause for his over-reaction and bullying of servants.

With public opinion heavily stacked against him, learned counsel advised Macrae to flee Scotland rather than face a hostile jury. This he did, accompanied by Amory, after signing his Holmains estate in Dumfrieshire and a mansion in Restalrig over to trustees. His non-appearance in court immediately incurred a declaration of 'outlaw' from the bench. →



His family soon followed him into exile in France. Occasionally they travelled 'incognito' from Paris to London from where he sounded out the possibility of his return and rehabilitation into Scottish society. This was not to be and, thirty years after that fateful day in Musselburgh, he died in France, having squandered most of his fortune.<sup>5</sup>

The Library holds a number of reports of duelling.<sup>6</sup> Most with similarly tragic consequences for the family of the survivor. The one exception was that fought in 1826 between linen merchant James Landale and his bank manager George Morgan. The survivor, Landale was acquitted by a jury sitting at Perth, after deliberating for thirteen hours, on the grounds that being hit over the head with an umbrella on a public street in Kirkcaldy by his opponent was aggravation in the extreme.<sup>7</sup> This proved to be the last fatal duel fought on Scottish soil.

A few are comic. An example being the pistol duel fought between Charles MacLaren and Dr James Browne, the editors of the *Scotsman* and *Caledonian Mercury*, at Ravelston, Edinburgh in November 1829. They managed to miss each other and stomped off without shaking hands. The ladies were better behaved. The duel fought in Hyde Park in 1792 with pistols and swords between Lady Almeria Braddock and Mrs Elphinstone over the former's age was settled when, have receiving a sword wound to her arm, Mrs Elphinstone agreed to write an apology.<sup>8</sup> Fortunately, the rapid technological advances in the early 19th century to personal weaponry, notably the rifled shot, and changing social attitudes, put an end to this form of settling a dispute. The last recorded duel fought on British soil was in 1845. **nls**

#### Discover more

1. The details of the duel and surrounding events are available in the NLS manuscript *'Memorial for James Macrae esq., of Holmains'*.

📖 Shelfmark: NG.1169.j.20

2. The theatre was built in 1769 and was soon the epicentre of society life in Edinburgh. It stood in Shakespeare Square at the eastern end of Princes Street next to the North Bridge. This site was later redeveloped as the main Post office and is currently the Waverleygate office complex. See: [www.nls.uk/playbills/history.html](http://www.nls.uk/playbills/history.html)

3. Peter Burnet, a black valet later wrote an eye-witness account of this fracas outside the theatre. See: *Sketch of the Life of Peter Burnet, a negro.*

📖 Shelfmark: NG.1169.j.20

4. John Kay's *Portraits* (1887 edition) can be consulted on the open shelf of the NLS general reading room. Macrae's portrait and extracts of the letter exchanged between the two combatants are on pp. 37-40.

📖 Shelfmark: Biog.D.5.IK

5. Stirton, Edith G K, *The Tragedy of Marionville or the True Story of Captain Macrae* (Forfar, 1930).

📖 Shelfmark S.124.i

6. The online catalogue has a subject heading dedicated to 'duelling'. See: [www.nls.uk/broadsides/subject.cfm/key/duelling](http://www.nls.uk/broadsides/subject.cfm/key/duelling)

7. *Fatal duel! An account of that fatal duel that took place, between George Morgan, Esq., banker, and David Landale....* Shelfmark: L.C.Fol.74(99) and George Buchan, *Remarks on the late trial of David Landale, Esq. for killing Mr. Morgan in a duel.*

📖 Shelfmark: Adv.MS.9.1.2.ff.239-55

8. Baldick, Robert, *The duel. A history of duelling,*

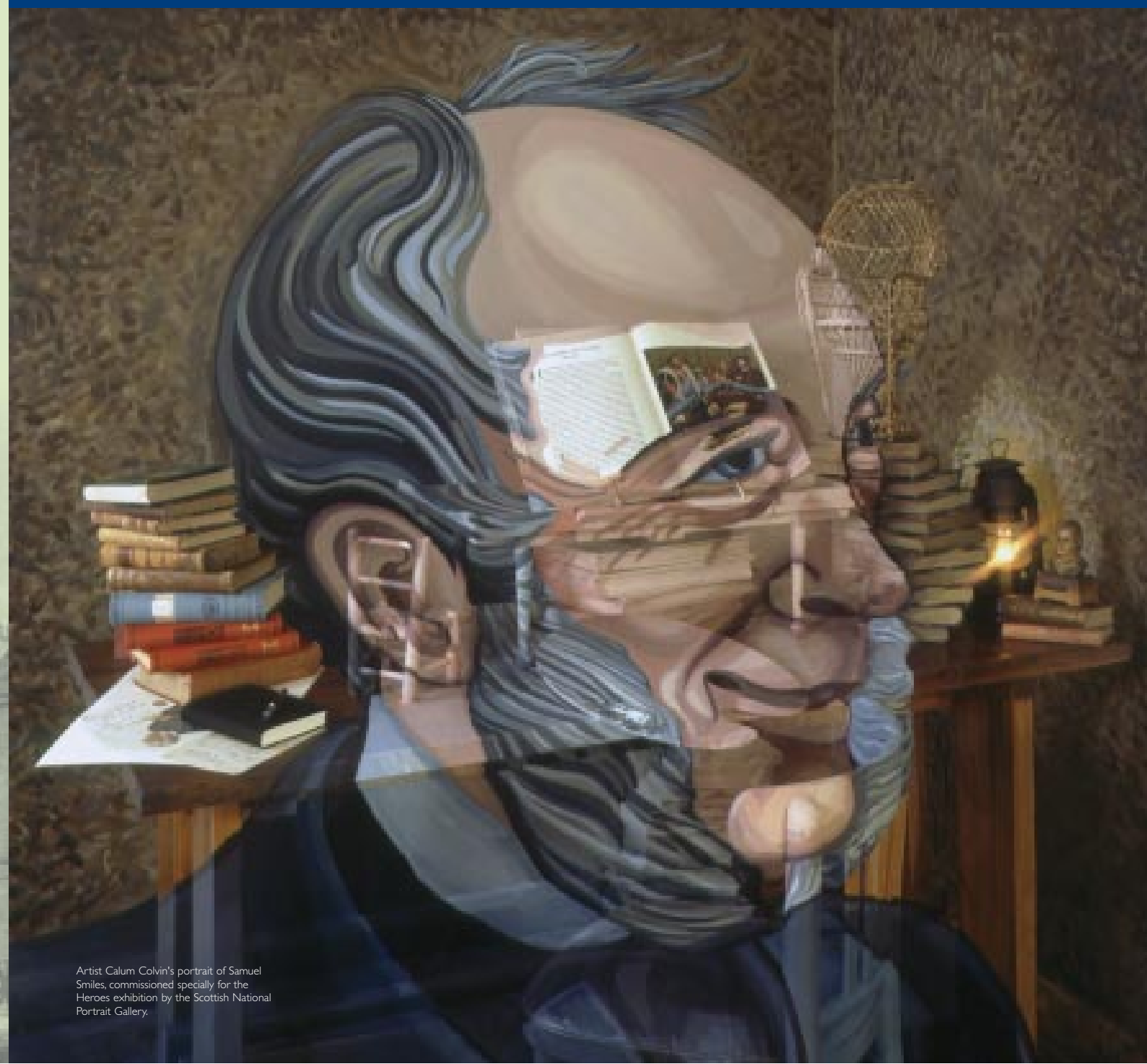
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Edinburgh's Theatre Royal.

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John Murray Archive Curator **David McClay** explains how a previously rejected book by a little known author became an unexpected international bestseller.

# Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* Heroes



Artist Calum Colvin's portrait of Samuel Smiles, commissioned specially for the Heroes exhibition by the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

**S**elf-Help: with Illustrations of Character, Conduct and Perseverance<sup>1</sup> by Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) was published by John Murray in 1859. It was one of the most successful non-fiction books of the century, an immediate bestseller selling 20,000 copies within a year and over 250,000 copies by the end of the century.<sup>2</sup> Compare this with another of Murray's books published the very same day; Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, which by the author's death in 1882 had sold 18,000 copies.

*Self-Help* was even more successful internationally, selling millions of copies. Much to Smiles' annoyance, a lack of effective international copyright law saw his work extensively 'pirated', particularly in the United States of America where a dozen publishers had combined sales that outsold the official Murray edition many times over. *Self-Help* was also translated into over 40 languages, including Welsh, Icelandic and Armenian, and nine different language editions for India alone. The Korean, Chinese and Japanese editions are still in print today.

The book presented biographical sketches, anecdotes and quotes from a wide range of men who, for Smiles, displayed the necessary qualities of character to inspire working men. Thrift, duty and hard work were all admired but the principal quality Smiles wished to promote was perseverance: the determination to overcome adversity and obstacles. His message was that success in life depended not on genius or intellect but on 'the energetic use of simple means and ordinary qualities, with which nearly all human individuals have been endowed.'<sup>3</sup>

Smiles' heroes came from all professions and backgrounds including artists, writers, soldiers and reformers. He was also keen to promote those from the newer professions, such as potters, naturalists, geologists, manufacturers, and especially engineers. Particular attention was given to those who had risen from humble and poor backgrounds.

One of his greatest heroes was the African explorer and missionary Dr David Livingstone. He grew up in poverty, working for 12 hours a day in a cotton mill at the age of 12, before doing two hours at school. Despite these hardships, he became a doctor and dedicated his life to missionary and anti-slavery campaigning.

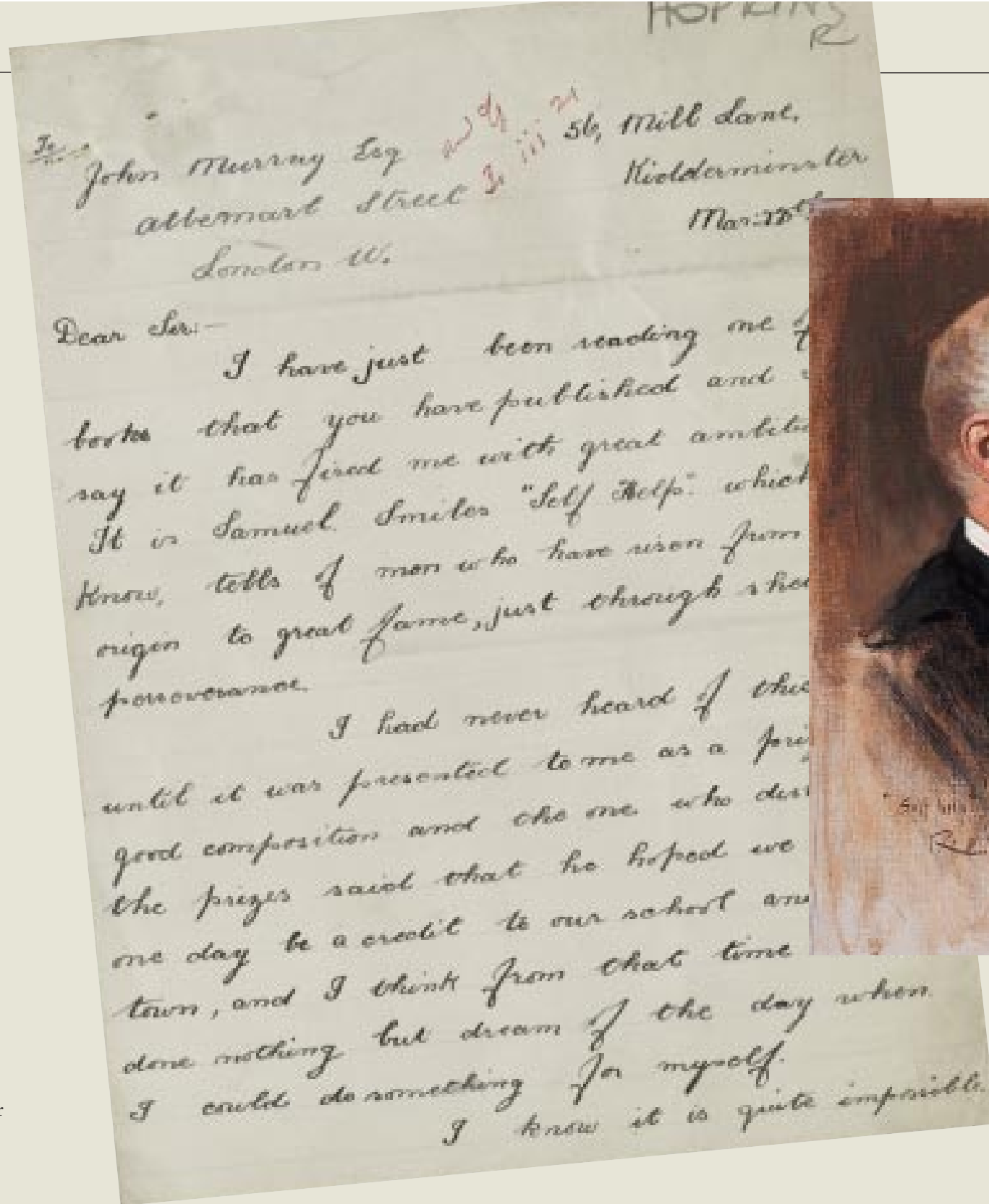
Livingstone was a perfect self-help hero, being a model not only of self-improvement but of self sacrifice as well.

Smiles displayed something of these qualities himself. Born in Haddington, East Lothian, his father owned a modest general store. While not poor, his parents had to work hard and do without to provide an education for their eleven children. His early education was solid, if undistinguished. In his *Autobiography* he recalls the words of one of his schoolmasters: 'Smiles! You will never be fit for anything but sweeping the streets of your native borough.'<sup>4</sup> Despite this low opinion, Smiles managed to progress to Edinburgh University to study medicine.

He struggled to make his way as a surgeon and general practitioner in Haddington where work was scarce and poorly paid. He moved on to edit the reformist *Leeds Times*, but this was also poorly paid. Afterwards he became a company secretary, firstly to the Leeds and Thirkirk Railway, then the South-Eastern Railway and later the National Provident Institution. In his spare time he campaigned for parliamentary, social and educational reform through lecturing and writing.

It was his interest in the railway engineer George Stephenson that produced his first real literary success; *The Life of George Stephenson* (1857). Encouraged by this, Smiles dusted off the previously rejected manuscript of what would become *Self-Help*. The manuscript amounted to little more than the accumulated notes he had used for speaking to working-men's associations. This consisted of quotes and anecdotes of Smiles' heroes, whom he thought suitable role models for his audience. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the publisher Routledge had been dismissive of this 'cobbled-together' work, rejecting it four years earlier. However the publishing house of John Murray saw little risk in publishing the work, as Smiles agreed to cover all costs personally, with Murray receiving a modest 10% of the sales income to cover his involvement. This proved to be a clever decision as Smiles made over £18,000 from the book sales.

The success of the Stephenson work and *Self-Help* brought him a lucrative career as the biographer of the day. He favoured biographies of the new heroes of the Victorian age: the engineer,



Above: *Self-Help* inspired much florid correspondence from readers.

industrialist and manufacturer, particularly if they had achieved success through hard work and had overcome adversity and obstacles. The most notable of these biographies was his multi-volume *Lives of the Engineers* (1861-62). A series of instructional and inspirational books in the *Self-Help* style followed with *Character* (1871), *Thrift* (1875), *Duty* (1880) and *Life and Labour* (1887).

Despite this literary success Smiles continued to work, with his writing being confined to evenings. He only retired in 1871, at the age of



Above: Samuel Smiles, 1812-1904, Author and Reformer, by Sir George Reid. Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

59, following a debilitating stroke. Once he'd recovered, and relearned how to read and write, he continued to be published into old age, publishing his final work *Josiah Wedgwood* in 1894 when he was 82. His prolific literary output consisted of 25 books and hundreds of articles, essays and pamphlets. →

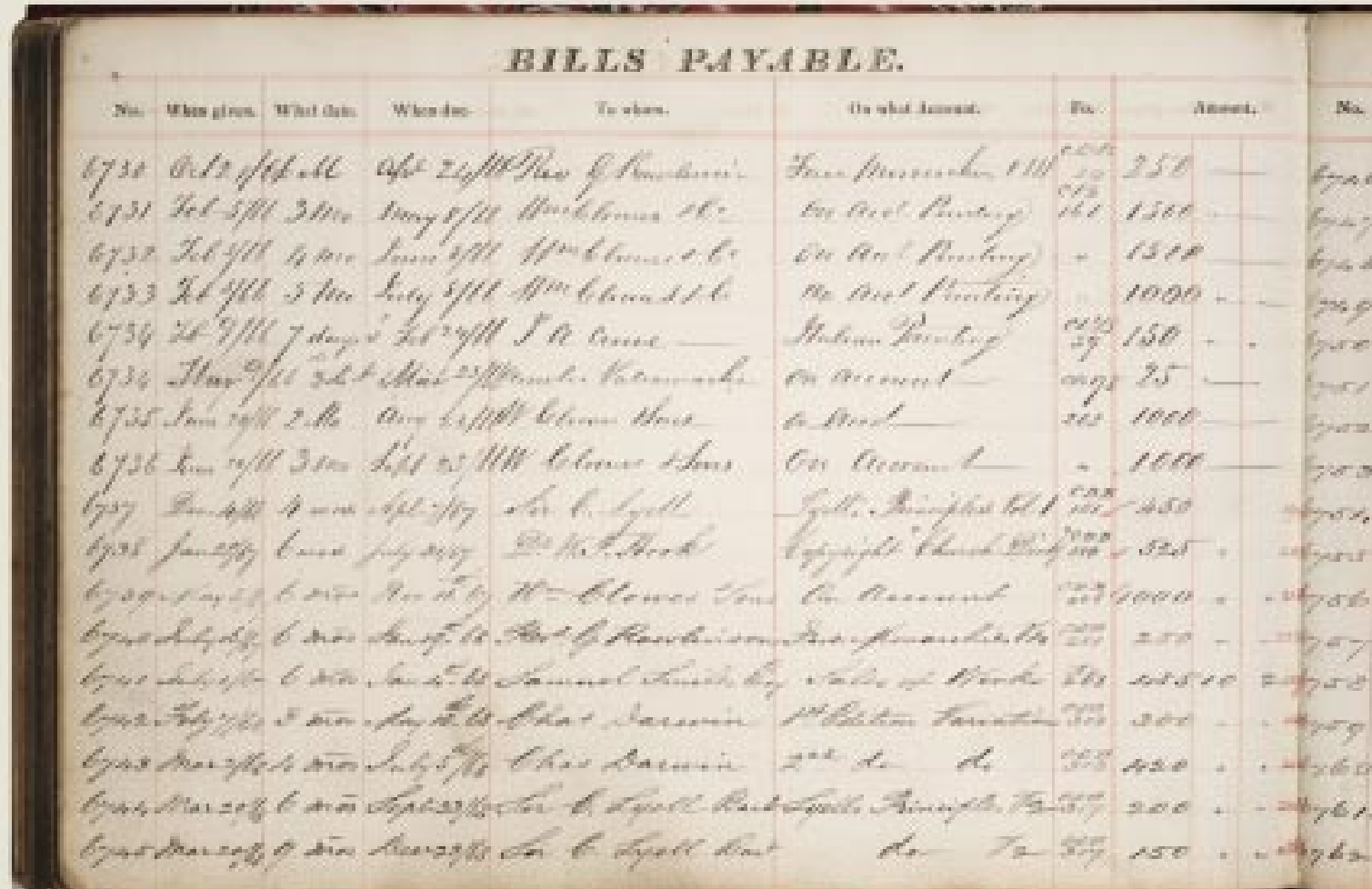
His books, particularly *Self-Help*, sold solidly throughout the 19th century. This was despite Smiles' insistence on maintaining a relatively high price for the book, against the advice of his publisher John Murray. Following the author's death, *Self-Help* continued to sell reasonably well for many years, although this may be largely attributed to the reduced price. Smiles did not produce the first self-help book, nor the first work of collected biographies. However, his *Self-Help* was incredibly influential on a wide range of subsequent biographers and self-help writers. The reputations of Smiles' heroes have enjoyed mixed success. Some, like David Livingstone, the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott, may still be recognised and admired today, but most of those on whom he wrote are little remembered or celebrated now. While his heroes may have faded in the public imagination, the values that these men embodied for Smiles - hard work, duty and perseverance - remain upheld as defining values of British character.

**Discover more**

**Heroes: Nineteenth Century Self-Help Role Models** opens at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on 30 May. The collaborative exhibition features material from the John Murray Archive and the National Galleries of Scotland, much of which will be on public display for the first time.

- Self-Help*. NLS holds numerous copies, including the Oxford World's Classics edition (2002)  
**1** Shelfmark: HPI.203.1211
- Details of the number of *Self-Help* copies sold, publishing arrangements, profits etc, can be found in the ledgers, business books and correspondence in the John Murray Archive. Find these on the catalogue: [www.nls.uk/jma/mss/search](http://www.nls.uk/jma/mss/search)
- Mackay, Thomas, editor. *The Autobiography of Samuel Smiles* (1905) p.222  
**1** Shelfmark: S.153.c
- Mackay, Thomas, editor. *The Autobiography of Samuel Smiles* (1905) p.9  
**1** Shelfmark: S.153.c
- Smiles, Aileen. *Samuel Smiles and his surroundings* (1956) p.191  
**1** Shelfmark: H3.89.1955
- The phrase self-help was first published in Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Man the reformer* (1841)  
**1** Shelfmark: 1904.27

Below: *Self-Help* kept the sales ledgers of publishers John Murray in rude health.



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Foreword by Magnus Linklater

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– Michael Palin,  
 broadcaster and modern-day traveller

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Order online direct from [www.tmltd.com](http://www.tmltd.com) or see [www.nls.uk](http://www.nls.uk) for further information

## ScottishPower light up the Library

First Minister Alex Salmond visited the Library in December when the new Advisory Board of ScottishPower held its first meeting here.

The nine person Advisory Board was formed following the merger of ScottishPower and their Spanish parent company Iberdrola, and comprises some of Scotland's most prominent public figures including Samantha Barber, Susan Deacon, Sir Tom Farmer CBE, Lord Kerr, Lord Macdonald, Sir Muir Russell and Ramón de Miguel.

Delegates were shown a selection of collection treasures on a suitable theme of historical links between Spain and Scotland. ScottishPower demonstrated their appreciation of the hospitality by generously sponsoring the decoration of the George IV Bridge front hall with a montage of imagery from the Library's collections.

Below: First Minister Alex Salmond MSP with Ignacio Galan, Chairman of ScottishPower.



## Improved services for customers with disabilities

Customers with disabilities will benefit from improved access measures next month when wheelchair users will have access to the reading rooms on the first floor of the Library's George IV Bridge building. The Library has also recently purchased a myReader2 to help customers with visual impairments. In addition to magnifying a page like a CCTV magnifier, myReader2 can also capture a page. This allows customers to navigate the page image with a trackball, and also to display the page text in different ways to aid comfortable and easy reading.

Please ask staff in the General Reading Room if you are interested in using the myReader2.

Further information on these developments is available at [www.nls.uk/help/specialneeds.gb.html](http://www.nls.uk/help/specialneeds.gb.html).

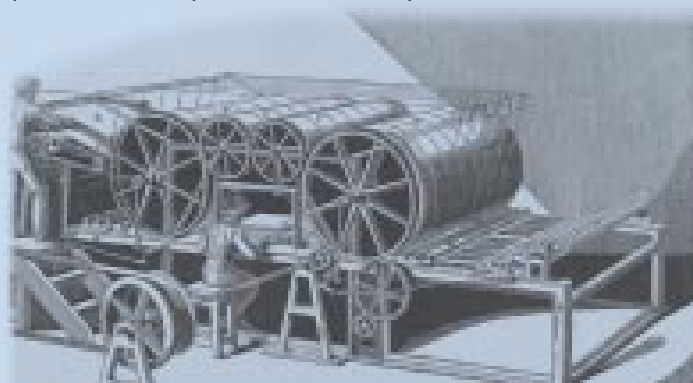
## Step back in time at the Old Town Festival

The Library is taking part in the 2008 Edinburgh Old Town Festival with a special historic walking tour following in the footsteps of influential publisher and writer Robert Chambers. *Traditions of Edinburgh* takes you back in time to the 1820s to experience a unique guided tour of the Old Town, as given by Robert Chambers, author of the celebrated 19th-century guidebook, *Walks in Edinburgh*. Refreshments will be provided at the end of the tour, plus the opportunity to view associated collection items.

*Traditions of Edinburgh* runs on **Saturday 21 June** at 10.30am, 11.45am and 1pm. To book a place, please call the NLS Events Line on **0131 623 4675** or email [events@nls.uk](mailto:events@nls.uk).

Further details on the Old Town Festival can be found at [www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk](http://www.scottishstorytellingcentre.co.uk).

Meanwhile there was a public day of printing at Dundee University, with artists and printmakers collaborating to produce screenprints based on the original texts of the fathers of Scottish print: Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar.



## Printing celebrations roll on

Celebrations around 500 Years of Printing in Scotland gathered particular momentum during the anniversary week in early April. Visitors were given a chance to see Scotland's earliest dated printed book at the Library, where the sole copy is housed. Elsewhere in Edinburgh, a commemorative plaque was unveiled by Councillor Donald Wilson in Edinburgh's Cowgate near the site of Chepman and Myllar's printing press, while Heidelberg UK brought printing on the road with a specially kitted out van giving free demonstrations of a modern printing press and printing souvenir posters for people to take away. In Glasgow, one of Scotland's earliest books, *Blind Harry's Wallace* was put on display as the Mitchell Library's Treasure of the Month.

## World's largest published book goes on display

Visitors got a rare opportunity to see the world's largest published book on World Book Day in March. *Bhutan: a visual odyssey across the last Himalayan kingdom* measures 5x7 feet when open and weighs 133 lbs (around nine and a half stone or 60 kilos). Each copy is printed only on demand, and uses a roll of paper longer than a football field, more than a gallon of ink and 24 hours' printing time.

It contains full colour photographs of Bhutan, also known as 'Shangri-La'. They were taken by students and staff at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and at the University of Washington, and by Bhutanese photographers.

The book went on show for a week in March to mark World Book Day when visitors were also given 'behind the scenes' tours of the George IV Bridge building.

Right: A young visitor takes in the world's biggest published book during World Book Day.



## Competition

### Win a book celebrating one of 'Romantic Edinburgh's' finest churches

*St John's Episcopal Church Edinburgh* by Diane Watters, published by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, examines the history and architecture of St John's Church. Its revived Gothic interior was unprecedented in Scotland in 1818, and it was the first of the new Gothic towers that helped create the famous 19th century 'Romantic Edinburgh' cityscape.

In this attractive and insightful book, Diane Watters re-evaluates the church's significance and legacy, the architectural debates it has inspired, the wider impact it has had on Scottish religious and cultural life and the vital role it has played in the Christian life of Edinburgh's New Town over its history.

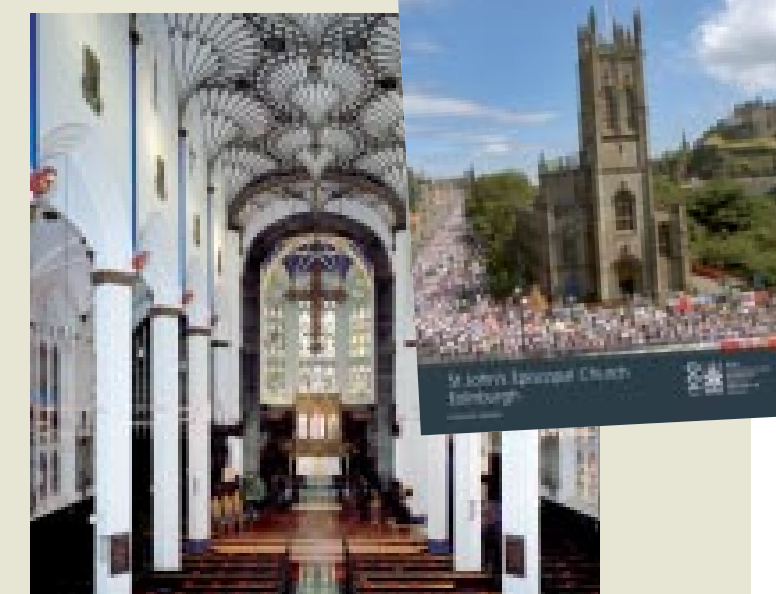
To win one of three copies, simply answer this question:

**William Burn was the architect of St John's Episcopal Church. When and where was he born?**

For help with your answer go to [www.rcahms.gov.uk](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk).

#### 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](mailto:discover@nls.uk)  
Please put 'competition' in the subject field.



Each issue we speak to an individual involved with NLS and find out what it means to them.



#### What do you do?

I'm Corporate Services Director at ScottishPower, with overall responsibility for communications, IT services, security, health and safety, our fleet and property, human resources, and training and development. I provide the various businesses within ScottishPower with cost-effective services.

#### What is your relationship with the Library?

Recently I've been working with NLS in a number of ways. I sit on the John Murray Archive fundraising campaign group where I assist by drawing on my contacts and commercial experience. In December 2007 we were very pleased to host the inaugural advisory board meeting of ScottishPower and its Spanish parent company, Iberdrola in the Library's prestigious board room on George IV Bridge. In preparation for this, we sponsored the decoration of the Library's front hall area with a series of panels illustrated with collection images, and I'm a personal donor to the JMA campaign too.

#### How did you first get involved with NLS?

I first visited the Library in January 2007. Libraries have always meant a lot to me. I was brought up in Craigmillar, an area of Edinburgh that has faced its difficulties, and libraries offer a gateway to a different world, to freedom of thought and expression. So when I was invited to visit, I went along with an open mind to see how we could make a difference.

#### Why does ScottishPower support NLS?

As two great national institutions, ScottishPower and NLS share many values. We believe in world-class thinking, in a future informed by its past. Sustainability in its many forms is very important to us, and so we want to protect our cultural heritage, as found in the Library, in any way that we can. The Library brings value just by existing. It provides a knowledge base and holds the collective consciousness of the country: it reminds us what it means to be Scottish.

#### Could you identify any particular highlights from our collections that you have been shown?

The Library offers so many unique opportunities to lay your hands on a piece of history. Obviously it was interesting to see the papers of electricity pioneer Michael Faraday and on the productivity of the mines in the 19th century. These showed that the pace of change was just as rapid then as we know it is today. A major part of my role concerns the management of people, so it was interesting to see how relevant the thinking on role models in Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* remains. On a more personal level, it was a great delight to see and hold material connected with childhood favourites, such as the adventures of David Livingstone, Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and JM Barrie's *Peter Pan*.

#### Your NLS?

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Friday, 2nd May 2008 9.15 - 18.00  
Boardroom of the National Library of Scotland,  
George IV Bridge, Edinburgh  
Speakers include: Mary Fischer, John Flood, WA Kelly,  
Henrike Lähnemann, and Susan Reed