

JK ROWLING THE TALES OF BEEDLE THE BARD

DISCOVER

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland | www.nls.uk | Winter 2008

WIN
A LIMITED EDITION ATLAS



Enrico Cocozza

The strange and wonderful films of Wishaw's David Lynch



DECIPHERING HISTORICAL TEXTS

WORLD AIDS DAY

COMMONPLACE BOOK CONSERVED

18TH-CENTURY BEEKEEPING

RARE BOOKS RETURN

LIBRARY 2.0

Robert Burns

How a tour of Scotland changed our national poet

Discover a new look and a packed magazine

Those of you who regularly read *Discover NLS* will have probably already noticed our redesign. With a new editor and design team in place, we are continuing to build on changes introduced in the last issue. Many of these stemmed from suggestions we had from readers, and your feedback continues to inform how we develop the magazine.

One of the strengths of *Discover NLS*, and of course the Library itself, is the diversity of the subject matter we hold, and in this issue we run the gamut from one of Scotland's most famous sons to a little-known Lanarkshire filmmaker.

In our new look news section you will find updates on a number of Library initiatives that expand our reach across the country, both physically and through new media. We also report on the latest stage of our exciting Visitor Centre project as well as on the latest Library activities – such as the 'Women on the Platform' seminar held at the end of October.

On our feature pages, the Library's own Kenneth Dunn treats us to a preview of the Burns touring exhibition for Homecoming Scotland, which offers visitors a chance to view the poet in a brand new light. We also delve into the Scottish Screen Archive to tell the story of Enrico Coccozza, a cinematographer dubbed 'Scotland's David Lynch', and explore new NLS projects, with the help of Digital Library Systems Manager James Toon.

We hope you enjoy the issue, and do tell us what you think.



Professor Michael Anderson
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



One of the strengths of NLS is the diversity of the subject matter we hold



J.K. ROWLING THE TALES OF BEEDLE THE BARD

DISCOVER nls



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

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5 most popular NLS films showing on YouTube



1st

ARP SCHOOLS

A teacher shows his primary class how to fit their gas masks



2nd

RAILWAY RIDE

A steam train pulls away from Wormit station



3rd

MUNGO'S MEDALS

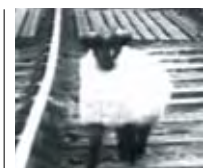
Efforts to alleviate the housing shortage in Glasgow



4th

OUR THREE R'S

A first day at a Scottish primary school



5th

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The early days of the steam train in the West Highlands

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A one-page guide on how to find your way round the Library's collections and services

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The latest NLS news and comment. In this issue, a first look at the new Visitor Centre, Richard Ford joins the John Murray Archive, plus restoring the diaries of Byron's lover

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Kenneth Dunn reveals how NLS' major new touring exhibition will see Burns tour Scotland once more

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The online library is growing fast. James Toon explains what it is, and how to use it

22 REELING IN THE MAN THAT SHOULD

Enrico Coccozza is a 1950s filmmaker who produced some bizarre and surreal films. Mitch Miller looks back at the man's life and times and wonders why he never quite made it

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James Mitchell on an important beekeeping manuscript that survived rumours of fire and misappropriation, before finding its way into the care of NLS

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John Murray Archive Writer in Residence Peter Arnott reflects on how exploring the Library has influenced his approach to writing

29 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Olive Geddes on the challenges of deciphering handwritten manuscripts



Burns' tour of the country awakened his sense of national identity

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Over mountain and loch, we follow in Burns' footsteps with a new exhibition

Contributors to this issue include



Almut Boehme
The Library's Head of Music since 2000, Almut previously worked at the Royal College of Music



Allan Burnett
Journalist and historian, Allan is the author of *Robert Burns And All That*, published by Birlinn



James Mitchell
Prior to working in the Rare Books Collections Division, James worked at Edinburgh University



James Toon
James is responsible for the development and implementation of all digital library systems at NLS

NLS Navigation

You may be a first-time visitor, or a reading room regular, but with a collection consisting of around 14 million printed items, two million maps, 32,000 films, over three miles of manuscripts, plus thousands of photos and journals, getting around NLS requires a little navigation

How to join

To use the Library's reading rooms and to order up items from the collections, you need to hold a reader's ticket. Anyone with a valid address in Scotland can apply for one. An application form can be picked up at George IV Bridge or the Causewayside Building, or downloaded from www.nls.uk, however it must be submitted in person, along with your proof of identity (driving licence, passport or a matriculation card are all valid), a recent utilities bill and two up-to-date passport photographs.

Using the Library

With a reader's ticket you gain access to the reading rooms, from where you can view material held in the Library's collection. Requests for specific items can be made in person, by telephone: 0131623 3700, by email: enquiries@nls.uk or through the website at: <http://tinyurl.com/66lmk2>. If you know what you're looking for, we recommend you make your request in advance of your visit to the Library.

Online

NLS has a vast range of electronic resources, including digital versions of reference works such as *Who's Who* and the *Oxford Dictionary of Biography*; massive full-text facsimiles of entire printed collections, including *Times Digital Archive 1785-1985*; and business resources such as Frost & Sullivan databases. Many of these are available over the Internet to readers living in Scotland (although restrictions do apply to some resources, in line with publishers' licence agreements). Your first port of call to unlock the Library's online collection is www.nls.uk/catalogues



Scottish Screen Archive



FOCUS ON MAP COLLECTIONS

NLS has one of the world's largest map libraries, holding around two million maps covering most parts of the world. The Map Collection also includes atlases, gazetteers, guidebooks, journals and mapmaking books. Thousands of map images are available to view at: www.nls.uk/maps

NLS locations

FILMS

Scottish Screen Archive:
39-41 Montrose Avenue
Hillington Park, Glasgow
G52 4LA
Tel 0845 366 4600
(local rate)
Email ssaenquiries@nls.uk

MAPS

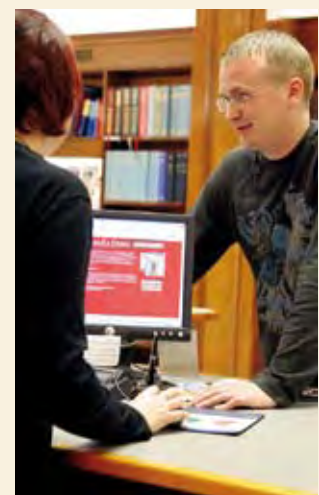
Causewayside Building
33 Salisbury Place,
Edinburgh EH9 1SL
Tel 0131623 3970
Email maps@nls.uk
Opening hours Monday -
Friday 9.30am-5pm (except
Wednesday 10am-5pm),
Saturday 9.30am-1pm

ALL OTHER COLLECTIONS

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Edinburgh EH1 1EW
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Email enquiries@nls.uk
Opening hours Monday -
Friday 9.30am-8.30pm
(except Wednesday 10am-
8.30pm), Saturday 9.30-1pm



NLS on George IV Bridge



Issue Hall

The Alhambra,
near Granada,
as seen by
Richard Ford



JOHN MURRAY ARCHIVE

Exhibition welcomes author of 'offensive' Spanish guidebook.

At the end of October, Richard Ford (1796-1858) joined the John Murray Archive exhibition. An art connoisseur and artist in his own right, Ford wrote the influential *Gatherings from Spain* (1846), published by John Murray.

He is, however, best remembered for writing the first modern guidebook to Spain: *Murray's Hand-book for Travellers in Spain* (1845). This was compiled from notes gathered during his extensive Spanish travels, where he rode some 2,000 miles, immersing himself in Spanish life and culture.

Ford's publication was to prove a great critical and commercial success, reaching its ninth edition by the end of the century. In fact one 19th-century reviewer claimed it was 'as much use to us as all other Spanish literature put together' and 'almost worth its

weight in gold.' (*The Graphic*, 15 November 1889)

However, the first edition was pulled, only partly completed, from the printing press. Ford was advised by friends to suppress it, fearing it could offend Spaniards and the French, both of whom had occupied the country during the recent Napoleonic wars.

The John Murray Archive display features Ford's lively letters to Murray, including a correspondence discussing the editing and reduction of the second edition, in which Ford writes of Murray 'Oh matador of authors! Oh boweless executioner of eminent pens! Oh Murray my Murray: *et tu fili mi!*' The exhibition also includes some of Ford's original artwork as well as a rare suppressed edition of his handbook, both on



A contemporary portrait of artist, connoisseur and writer Richard Ford

generous loan from the Ford family.

Following Ford in February 2009, the John Murray Archive exhibition will welcome Lady Caroline Lamb (1785-1828). She remains perhaps best known as the obsessed lover of the poet Lord Byron, whom she once described as 'Mad, bad and dangerous to know'.

INSIDE THIS SECTION BYRON'S LOVE LETTERS // JK ROWLING // WORLD AIDS DAY // YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A FACSIMILE OF THOMSON ATLAS //

CONSERVATION

Commonplace Book of Byron's lover is conserved

Lady Caroline Lamb is best remembered for her tempestuous affair with 19th-century poet Lord Byron. Much of their relationship is documented within the pages of her *Commonplace Book*, a collection of diary entries and transcription of literary passages held by NLS in the John Murray Archive.

JMA Conservator Kate Kidd recently completed the painstaking process of repairing the book – here's how she did it.



BEFORE

1 The text block is in a bad way, with its pages torn and coming away from the binding.

TEXT BLOCK

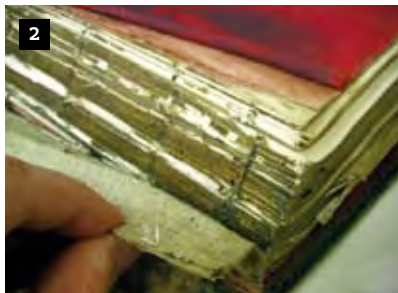
2 The original spine lining is removed and the sewing cut. Any damage is repaired with Japanese paper and wheat starch paste. The spine folds are reinforced with Japanese paper too, and the block of pages is re-sewn through the original holes.

BINDING

3 The damaged corners are repaired and strengthened by splitting the leather surrounding the area and applying a wheat starch paste in between the layers of board. Where board is missing at the corner, Japanese paper fibres mixed with wheat starch paste are applied, shaped and covered with new pared leather.

PUTTING IT BACK TOGETHER

4 The boards are re-attached by lacing new cords through the original holes. Wheat starch paste is then applied to the new spine leather,



which is then attached to the boards under the original leather. The old spine is applied over the new spine.

FINISHING TOUCHES

5 Japanese paper is toned to match the silk endpapers, and is applied to the inner joint. The damaged silk

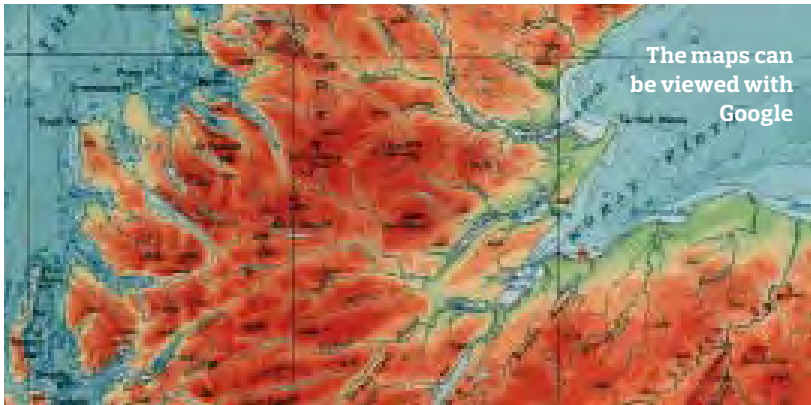


is carefully adhered back into place with wheat starch paste. Now the book's restoration is complete.

For more on the John Murray Archive's collection of Byron's personal papers: www.nls.uk/jma/topics/literature.html



Lady Caroline Lamb, 1785 – 1828, painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence



ORDNANCE SURVEY

More maps online

Over 2,000 six-inch to the mile scale maps have now been added to the Library's online collection. The maps date from 1843 to 1882, when Ordnance Survey (OS) carried out its earliest comprehensive survey of Scotland.

At the time, these maps were the most detailed to cover Scotland, and included a wide range of natural and man-made features for the first time.

For those familiar with modern day online tools, the online versions come with a special overlay allowing them to be viewed with Google Maps. Accompanying the series is a guide to OS abbreviations and a detailed essay outlining the work of OS in 19th-century Scotland.

View the maps at www.nls.uk/maps/os/6inch/

GLOBAL TIES

NLS supporting Nova Scotia students

Reference Books Curator James Mitchell recently supervised a four-week student work placement for Sarah McCormack. Sarah is halfway through a two-year postgraduate degree in library and information studies in the School of

Information Management at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, and is the third student from the institute to complete a work placement at NLS.

Dalhousie University has close historical ties to Scotland, especially Edinburgh. It was founded in 1818 by George Ramsay, the 9th Earl of Dalhousie (1770-1838) during the period in which he held the post of Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia.

Ramsay's wish was to establish a liberal, non-denominational college in Halifax modelled upon the standards of the University of Edinburgh.

Today, Dalhousie is one of North America's leading universities with an enrolment of around 15,000 students. It is known as the research powerhouse of Eastern Canada.



5 books for World AIDS Day

1 December is World AIDS Day. NLS' Dora Petherbridge picks five significant AIDS texts



THE NORMAL HEART
Larry Kramer, London: Methuen, 1987

First performed in 1985, this play is one of the earliest and most vehemently outspoken examples of how American theatre became an integral player in raising awareness of the disease.



ESCAPE-AIDS / STRATHCLYDE HEALTH AND AIDS PROJECT IN EDUCATION

Strathclyde Regional Council, Glasgow: Jordanhill College of Education, 1990

Nine years after the first recorded cases of AIDS in the UK, this pack was published to inform 5-16 year olds.



AIDS: IMAGES OF THE EPIDEMIC
World Health Organisation, Geneva, 1994

Juxtaposing statistics and personal accounts, microbiology and photography, this book offers a portrait of AIDS in the early 1990s with special focus on the UK, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Thailand.



WILL TO LIVE: AIDS THERAPIES AND THE POLITICS OF SURVIVAL
João Biehl, Princeton: Princeton UP, 2007

Brazil was the first developing country to make life-saving AIDS treatments accessible to all. *Will to Live* charts the successes and the failures of the programme.



AIDS SUTRA: UNTOLD STORIES FROM INDIA
Edited by Negar Akhavi, London: Vintage, 2008

Seventeen distinguished Indian writers travelled the country to expose the extent of India's AIDS epidemic. The anthology was produced with The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation India AIDS Initiative.



EVENT

Women on the Platform

On the last day of October, the Library hosted a one-day seminar titled Women on the Platform, looking at the role female emancipationists in Scotland played to help end black slavery in the northern hemisphere.

The event began with a speech by the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the Rt. Hon. George Grubb, and the rest of the day saw a series of presentations investigating what is still a little-known aspect of Scottish history.

From 1840 on, these determined women joined with likeminded sympathisers in America to form the 'transatlantic sisterhood' and fight the cause of the enslaved black American. During the American Civil War the business elite of west coast Scotland actively supported the slave-holding South – building blockade runners and warships at immense profit. Such clandestine activities were unmasked by the local emancipationists.

Women on the Platform showed how this group of women pacifists stood up for what they believed in.

BY THE NUMBERS

7,347

Scottish theatre programmes are held by the Library. You can search the database at: www.nls.uk/collections/british/theatres/

JK Rowling: coming to NLS in December



SPECIAL EVENT

Rare JK Rowling book exhibited at Library

In December, NLS will be displaying an extremely rare edition of JK Rowling's *The Tales of Beedle The Bard*. There are only seven copies of the book in existence, and each one is handwritten and illustrated on vellum, bound in brown morocco leather and mounted with different semi-precious stones. Six of the books were given by the author to those most closely connected with the Harry Potter series; while the seventh was auctioned for £1.95million by Sotheby's on behalf

of the Children's High Level Group (CHLG) charity.

The copy, loaned to NLS by kind permission of Barry Cunningham (JK Rowling's first editor), will go on display at the Library from 5 December until 4 January 2009.

Meanwhile, the much-anticipated launch of the paperback edition of *The Tales of Beedle The Bard* takes place at NLS on Thursday 4 December. The event will feature JK Rowling reading extracts from the book to a group of local school children.



ARCHIVE AWARENESS

November is Archive Awareness Month. Arranged by the Archive Awareness Campaign, this initiative aims to bring to the attention of a wider audience the amazing wealth of material held by a number of different organisations; one of which is NLS' own Scottish Screen Archive. The theme for 2008 is 'Community

Participation', with the message going out to 'Take your place in History'. Campaign activity is being specifically aimed at community groups and schools.

For further information on the campaign and future events: www.archiveawareness.com

CURATOR'S CHOICE

Almut Boehme, the National Library's Head of Music on a collection of piobaireachd, or pipe tunes as verbally taught by the M'Crummen pipers in the Isle of Skye to their apprentices now published, as taken from John M'Crummen

Neil MacLeod of Gesto, Edinburgh: Alex Lawrie & Co, 1828.

Is this really music? It looks like meaningless syllables strung together to form words of some unknown language.

Even musicians with knowledge of methods of notation a world away from the standard 'dots on lines' are baffled by this text. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* describes *canntaireachd* as 'curious Scottish bagpipe notation, in which syllables stand for recognised groups of notes'.

While western-style notation of Highland bagpipe music, also known as pibroch, began to appear in the early 1800s, pibroch itself dates back much earlier and it is hardly surprising that a special system was invented to help in memorising these often quite complicated tunes.

Canntaireachd literally means humming a tune. It uses a system of vowels and consonants representing



Almut Boehme in the Library



'Meaningless syllables strung together': piobaireachd at first glance

notes of the tune and its variations in such a way that it can be sung and used to teach bagpipe tunes. Even today traditional teachers still use the system to some extent.

Pipers trace their art of pibroch back to the legendary family of bagpipers, the MacCrimmons, on the Isle of Skye. John (also known in Gaelic as Iain Dubh) MacCrimmon lived in Skye until 1822, and from him Neil MacLeod of Gesto, a local laird and piping enthusiast, noted down the *canntaireachd*, and published 20 of the pieces in 1828.

The extract shown here is from the original edition of Neil MacLeod's

publication, also known as the *Gesto Canntaireachd*. In comparison a standard notation version published by Angus Mackay is also shown.

Our copy of the *Gesto Canntaireachd* had belonged in turn to Sir John Graham Dalryell and John Francis Campbell of Islay, two of the leading figures in the history of Highland music and tradition. Its value is greatly enhanced by an autographed manuscript of notes on the tunes by Neil MacLeod himself. As bagpipe scholar Roderick Cannon tells us, this is a document which was long thought to have been lost.

NLS IN NYC AS ROBERT BURNS' TREASURES GO ON DISPLAY

In October New Yorkers were given a rare opportunity to look at letters penned by Robert Burns, as a special exhibition from NLS came to New York City's Forbes Galleries. This is the first time that some of the Library's most precious original papers of Scotland's national poet have left the Edinburgh strong-rooms.

Items on view included John Faed's artistic interpretation of the final scene of *Tam O'Shanter*, a volume compiled by the Boston Burns Club in 1859 to mark the 100th anniversary of Burns' birth, plus a selection from the *Glenriddell Manuscripts*, one of the most important collections of Burns' own writing.

Right NLS Trustee Lady Janet Balfour and Christopher Forbes with one of the exhibits



COMING SOON

New Visitor Centre in sight

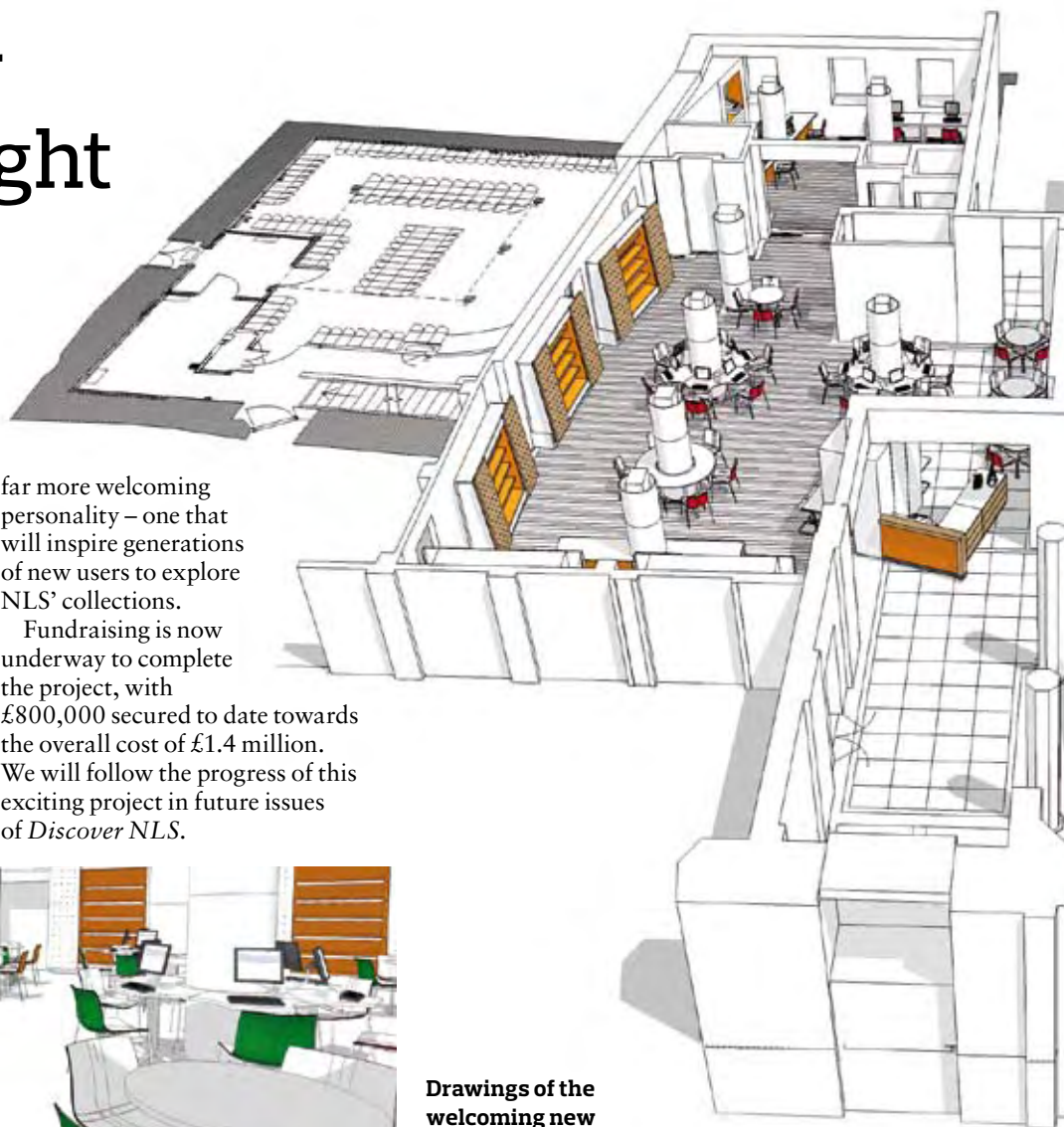
Visuals of the new George IV Bridge visitor and learning facilities have been released, showing for the first time exactly how the layout will open up the Library.

‘The project to improve the environment and facilities at the George IV Bridge site came about in response to market research,’ explains NLS’ Nat Edwards, who is heading up the project. ‘We realised the building’s grand architecture was a barrier to wider public use. The research also showed that visitors felt the Library lacked the kind of modern facilities they would expect from such an institution.’

The new facilities will enable walk-in use of a wide range of research, learning and information resources, plus a new café and shop. Once complete, the building will take on a

far more welcoming personality – one that will inspire generations of new users to explore NLS’ collections.

Fundraising is now underway to complete the project, with £800,000 secured to date towards the overall cost of £1.4 million. We will follow the progress of this exciting project in future issues of *Discover NLS*.



Drawings of the welcoming new Visitor Centre



SCOTTISH SCREEN ARCHIVE

Marquess of Bute wedding movie restored



The groom and his mother arrive at the wedding

The wedding of John Crichton-Stuart, 4th Marquess of Bute, to Miss Augusta Bellingham took place on 6 July 1905 at Castle Bellingham in County Louth. This joining of two pre-eminent Catholic families from Scotland and Ireland was the society event of the year.

What made this wedding special, however, was the couple’s decision to engage a cameraman to film the celebrations. Curators believe the

1905 film to be one of the earliest known family wedding films in the British Isles, predating by some 20 years the common use of home movie cameras. The film is the first title to be digitally restored by Scottish Screen Archive, using cutting edge techniques. It premiered in its restored form at Mount Stuart, where it was originally screened to the happy couple some 103 years ago.

The film will be available for all to see on the NLS website in early 2009.



**New facilities
will inspire
future
generations
to explore
NLS'
collections**

OUTREACH

NLS takes to the road



NLS staff at Ayr's Carnegie Library

In September, the NLS roadshow rolled into the Carnegie Library in Ayr as part of a series of events designed to give people all over Scotland an opportunity to find out more about the National Library. Alison Leslie (pictured) was part of the NLS team that day. 'The event helped debunk the myth that the Library is only for academics,' she says.

The roadshow was a two-way learning experience, with NLS staff able to mix with their public library colleagues. On display were a number of rare books and manuscripts, many with particular relevance to Ayr itself. A talk was given on Ayrshire maps, and a selection of films from the Scottish Screen Archive – all with an Ayrshire connection – were shown.

SPANISH CIVIL WAR BOOK UP FOR GRABS

The story of Scotland's involvement in the Spanish Civil War is to be told for the first time in a new book.

Homage to Caledonia by John Murray Archive Cataloguer Daniel Gray is published in November by Luath Press in conjunction with NLS. Using archive material, the book seeks to explain why Scotland's contribution to the conflict was so profound.

Discover NLS has a free copy of the book to give away. Just answer the following question:



QUESTION

How many Scots served in Spain as members of the International Brigades?

(a) 157 (b) 452 (c) 549

Post your entry, along with your address to: Competitions, Discover NLS, Marketing Services, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH11EW, or email: discover@nls.uk (marking 'Civil War Book competition' in the subject line). Closing date for entries is 16 January 2009.

▶ A new project is underway which will see digitised versions of over 1,500 books from the Library's Gaelic collections being made available on www.nls.uk. The collection, selected by Rare Books department, contains a mix of original Gaelic material and texts relating to language, history and culture.

Just a few of the volumes originally held at Cambuskenneth

ACQUISITION

Cambuskenneth books return

The Library has recently acquired a collection of 15 books with an intriguing early Scottish provenance. 14 of the 15 large folio printed volumes are editions or commentaries on civil and canon law, while the 15th is a copy of the Latin Vulgate Bible printed by Robert Estienne at Paris in 1532.

The books are one of the most significant surviving collections from pre-Reformation Scotland. They were once thought to have been looted from Holyrood Palace by an invading English army. However, evidence from within their own pages tells a different tale, linking them not with Holyrood but with Cambuskenneth Abbey near Stirling.

Eight of the 15 books can definitely be traced to two 16th-century abbots of Cambuskenneth, and it's likely that the others also belonged to them.

Other inscriptions in 12 of the books reveal they were taken from Edinburgh in 1544 by an English nobleman, Sir William Norris of Speke Hall, near Liverpool. In 1736 Speke Hall passed into the possession of the family of Beauclerk, and at some time between then and 1797, the books were removed, eventually to pass into the hands of a Liverpool solicitor, before coming into the care of the Liverpool Athenaeum in 1825.

It was from the Athenaeum that NLS eventually purchased the books, bringing them home at last.



WIN A COPY OF THE THOMSON ATLAS

► Publishers Birlinn have produced a new facsimile version of John Thomson's seminal 1832 *Atlas of Scotland* using maps from NLS' collection. Thomson's meticulous work depicted Scotland as never before, rivalling work of the best European cartographers.

Birlinn's new limited edition version is published in association with NLS and features 58 reproduction maps, accompanied by views, gazetteers and essays.

Discover NLS has a copy of this magnificent publication (RRP £150) to give away. For your chance to win, all you need to do is identify the geographical location detailed below.

■ Post your entry along with your address to Competitions, *Discover NLS*, Marketing Services, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW, or email: discover@nls.uk (marking 'Map competition' in the subject line). Closing date for entries is 16 January, 2009.

AWARDS

Visual artist scoops award

The Library's partnership with writing consultancy Henzteeth and visual artist Catriona Taylor has scooped the Small Business Award at the 2008 Arts and Business Scotland Awards in Aberdeen. 'When NLS' Cate Newton (pictured) and I initiated the artist-in-residence project, the prospect of an award wasn't part of the equation,'

explains Stuart Delves, Henzteeth Director. 'The congenial and successful partnership between Henzteeth, the National Library of Scotland and artist Catriona Taylor, resulting in her fabulous exhibition at George IV Bridge was reward itself. The Small Business sponsorship accolade is the icing on a richly layered cake. A very tasty icing mind.'



Following in the footsteps of Burns

NLS' **Kenneth Dunn** explains to Allan Burnett how a major new touring exhibition will see the Bard zig-zagging Scotland once more

The 28-year-old Robert Burns spent some days in the summer of 1787 travelling round the northern part of Scotland exploring the country of his birth. On his travels he heard traditional laments, shanties, ditties, chants and love songs recited by people from all over the country and all walks of life. The sounds inspired him to work on a more serious enterprise than that which had just made him the celebrated 'ploughman poet' of Ayrshire, and the toast of Edinburgh society.

Burns became aware of the need to record the nation's traditional songs for posterity, and the results of this enterprise repaid his debt to the nation's musical heritage. Now, on the eve of the 250th anniversary of Burns' birth on 25 January 1759, the poet's debt is being repaid once more.

A major new touring exhibition of Burns collections will see him take to the highways once more – in spirit if not in body – to mingle with people across the land.

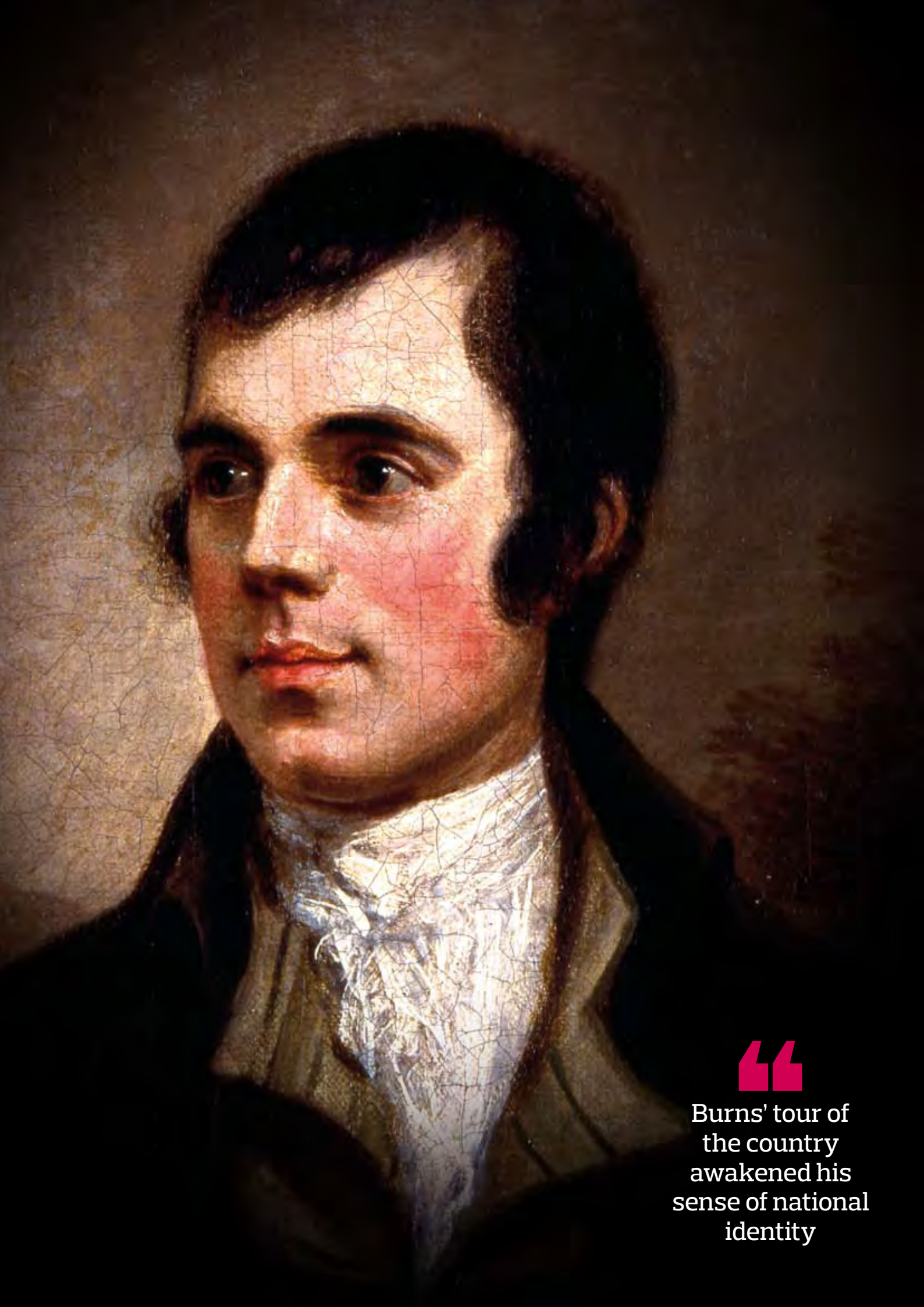
Having opened on 7 November for a duration of nearly three months in Edinburgh, the display of manuscripts, letters, books, art and other objects is set to travel further afield. It is the most significant touring exhibition of Burns collections for more

than a decade and provides a fresh opportunity to take a look at the life and legacy of Scotland's national poet from the vantage point of the 21st-century.

This impressive undertaking is the work of the National Burns Collection, a joint project set up to co-ordinate the work of the various Robert Burns heritage sites, each with its own collection of Burns material. NLS, and a Senior Curator of Manuscripts, Kenneth Dunn, are playing a central role. At his office, Kenneth explains how it all came about. 'The touring exhibition is one of the outcomes of the National Burns Collection project, which was set up a few years ago. It is being co-ordinated by NLS along with the National Galleries of Scotland.'

Kenneth and his colleagues decided on key themes for the exhibition, covering Burns' political interests, his private life, his travels and other significant areas. 'We then considered what objects we would ideally like to illustrate those themes,' Kenneth goes on to explain. 'We negotiated with various institutions in the National Burns Collection to see what we could actually have.'

'In the end,' he adds, 'I believe we have managed to pull together objects that successfully illustrate the themes we want to cover.'



Burns' tour of
the country
awakened his
sense of national
identity

Drawing up salient themes and digging out appropriate material are key to mounting a good exhibition. But the big question is, with someone as well-known as Burns, how can this exhibition say something that we haven't heard before?

During his travels Burns met new characters and devised new songs

'It is difficult to say something new about Burns,' concedes Kenneth as he leafs through a box of letters. 'So in order to do that we have used this.' He holds up a blotchy, water-damaged volume. 'This is a draft version of Burns' autobiographical letter to Dr John Moore of August 1787. From the words of this letter we have taken the title of the exhibition – Zig-Zag: The Paths of Robert Burns. 'People think "zig-zag" is a very 1960s kind of word,' Kenneth continues. 'But Burns used it himself.' In the letter Burns writes that 'riotous passions may still make him zig-zag in his future path of life'.

It is perhaps the ideal choice of words to highlight the essence of Burns' life, with its contradictory and very often dramatic twists and turns. Burns' mind zig-zagged in many ways: between loyalty to the state and republicanism, between social realism and fantasy, and between the life of a dutiful exciseman chained to the machinery of government – his job in later years – and that of a free-thinking poet unshackled by authority and convention.

The poet's heart and loyalties famously zig-zagged between lovers and between social classes, often simultaneously, as illustrated by Burns' correspondence with Agnes McLehose, who styled herself 'Clarinda' to his 'Sylvander'. She was a woman of higher social standing, the daughter of a Glasgow surgeon, with whom Burns nevertheless formed a close bond. Kenneth shows me a letter, dated from 1788, which is due to be exhibited. 'It shows Burns and Agnes entering into their romantic exchange,' Kenneth explains.

'Burns is very revealing of himself, but the language is very stylised, florid, gushing, and it hints at things that clearly never happened. I don't think it was a consummated affair.'

Kenneth concedes that other people might take a different angle on whether or not Burns' relationship with McLehose was a sexual one. So the zig-zag motif extends to the question of interpretation. 'It would be wrong-headed to tell people what they should think about the exhibits,' he says. 'The curatorial input is important, but it is only offering you the pieces for consideration.' In the end, it is up to visitors to see the exhibits for themselves and make their own minds up.

Burns' zig-zagging was also, of course, geographical. He darted between the capital, Edinburgh, and his native Ayrshire in between sojourns down to the Borders and then up to the Highlands. 'His tour to the Highlands was especially important,' says Kenneth. 'It expanded his ideas about song and, although he composed new songs, much of what he did was collecting.'

Like other musical collectors of his time, Burns famously altered and 'improved' some of his discoveries – 'Auld Kindness Foryett' being transformed by Burns' hand into 'Auld Lang Syne',



BURNS AND HIGHLAND MARY.

Right up until the end of his life Burns was writing, and we will show one of his last letters

for example. But the poet had respect for the material. To illustrate this, Kenneth takes out another original Burns letter. In it, Burns explains his reluctance to change a song that he has recently discovered in case it is ruined.

While Burns' touring provided him with new material, new experiences and new acquaintances, it also affected him in a way that is still reverberating through Scotland in today's era of devolution. 'Burns' tour of the country awakened his sense of national identity,' says Kenneth. 'Touring those parts of the country that had been involved in the 1745 rebellion excited his interest in the Jacobites. Through this interest we can see that his tour unquestionably evoked in him an interest in Scotland's past.'

Several fruits of Burns' tour are due to be displayed, including his interleaved copy of *The Scots Musical Museum*, the uncompromising anthem 'Robert Bruce's March To Bannockburn', also known as 'Scots Wha Hae' – which Burns

The Glenriddell Manuscripts

The single most precious and revealing item that the National Library will contribute to the Burns touring exhibition is one of the Glenriddell Manuscripts.

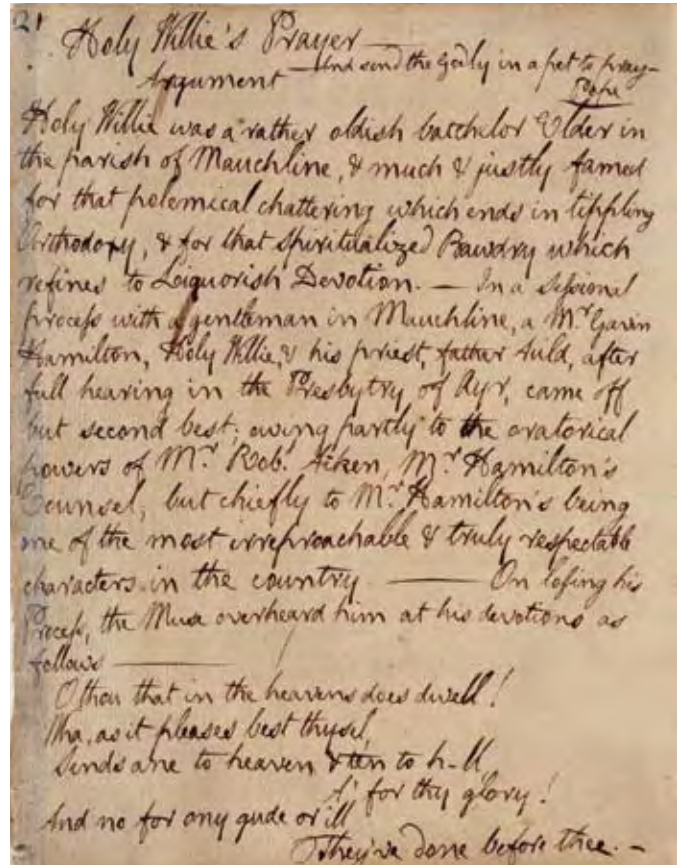
Senior curator Kenneth Dunn explains their significance. 'They are the most important Burns manuscripts in our collection. They are in two ornamented, calf-bound volumes and comprise fair copies of original Burns writings. Volume one is a collection of poetry and volume two is a collection of letters. Burns wrote them in the 1790s as a gift to his friend Robert Riddell of Glenriddell.' Some of their contents are in Burns' own hand, says Kenneth, and some have been written by a secretary.

In receiving the first of these manuscripts, Riddell was being treated to many individual treasures, including Burns' copy of 'Holy Willie's Prayer'. But mere friendship was not Burns' sole motivation for making his private papers available to others. 'Burns knew his own worth,' explains Kenneth. 'The extent to which he made copies of his poems and

handed them out to key people, as well as withholding certain things until after he died, shows his awareness of the importance of legacy. This awareness reaches perfection in the Glenriddell Manuscripts. They are a good example of Burns helping to manufacture and create his own myth, by making his letters available publicly.'

The poetry manuscript did not stay with the Riddells for long, however. 'The first volume was given back following a fall-out between Burns and the Riddells,' says Kenneth. 'The reason for the breach has never been clearly identified but it probably occurred after Burns did something very innocuous that was blown out of proportion. The Riddells were people of higher social standing, who welcomed Burns into their home, but should he commit any form of transgression – which he must have done – they would withdraw their friendship.'

When Robert Riddell died, Burns wrote to Riddell's family in 1794 requesting the return of the first volume which, he admitted, contained



verses 'some of them puerile and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye.' The Riddells complied and, upon Burns' death in 1796, both volumes were handed over by Burns' widow to the poet's biographer. They were later sold before eventually ending up in the hands of a Philadelphia-based Burns

enthusiast called John Gribbel. In 1913, Gribbel returned the manuscripts to their country of origin. The manuscripts were given to the Scottish nation and held in trust until the formation of the National Library of Scotland in 1925. The volumes were formally handed over to the Library's trustees the following year.

wrote some years after visiting the site of the medieval king's famous victory over the English army outside Stirling – and the journal he kept during the Highland Tour, on loan from the Burns Cottage and Museum in Alloway.

Whether such works were intended to undermine 18th-century Scotland's incipient Union with England, or whether Burns' nationalist rhetoric was mere dabbling, is a debate that will run and run – and perhaps Burns would have wanted it that way. 'Burns is such an intelligent and clever writer,' says Kenneth. 'His writings always keep you guessing as he "zig-zags" through life. Indeed, right up to the end of his life in 1796 Burns was writing, and the exhibition will show one of the very last letters he ever penned.'

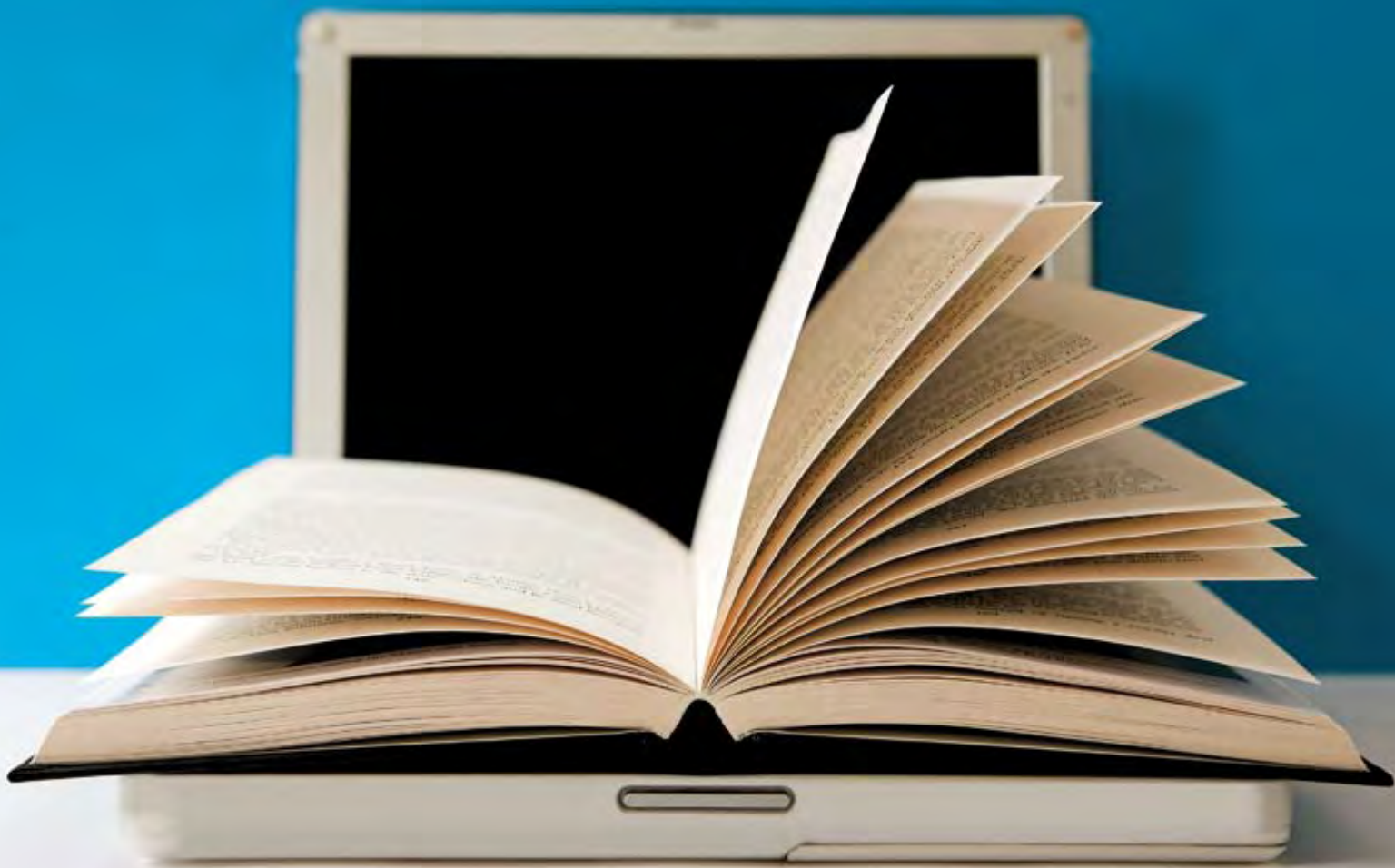
In addition to the written words, the array of artefacts Kenneth and his colleagues have mined from various Burns repositories is impressive. These range from the intriguingly personal, such as the poet's seal, to the ghoulishly fascinating – a bronze

**ZIG-ZAG:
THE PATHS OF
ROBERT BURNS**
NLS, Edinburgh
7 November 2008
until late January
**Aberdeen Art
Gallery & Museum**
14 February until
11 April
**Greyfriars Church
Dumfries**
July until August
**Hunterian
Museum, Glasgow**
October until
November

cast of Burns' skull. Also included are images that caught Burns in the flesh, such as the iconic portraits by the 18th-century's foremost painter of Scotland's great and good, Alexander Nasmyth.

When placed alongside Burns' literary legacy, these objects gain a new lease of life – bringing us closer to the man himself. 'Nevertheless, we have to lift the experience beyond that,' says Kenneth. 'What did Burns' close confidante Mrs Dunlop look like, for example? People want to see that. Sure, books and manuscripts are intrinsically important, since nobody would care about Burns were it not for the things he wrote. But the addition of these other objects gives the whole thing a boost. It gives you a more rounded impression of who Burns was, what he was about and the circle he inhabited.'

The opening hours for the NLS leg of the exhibition are: Monday–Friday: 10am–8pm, Saturday: 10am–5pm, Sunday: 2pm–5pm



Library 2.0

NLS isn't just a print library, there's also a wealth of digital material to explore and interact with. Digital Library Systems Manager **James Toon** explains what the digital library is, how it works and highlights a few of the treasures already available online

What is the digital library?

It's basically all of NLS' digital collections, including web archives, digitisations, digital acquisitions, and bought-in subscription content. Its function is also to provide the tools for staff and members of the public to access the Library's services.

It's obviously quite different to the other parts of the NLS' collections.

How do readers access it?

Most of the digital library collections are available through the NLS website. If you go to the home page, you can access them through the navigation bar (just click on 'digital library'). In the digital library section we highlight those materials that have most recently been



Connected James Toon behind the scenes

made available online, which could be anything from a 13th-century manuscript, The Murthly Hours to records of Winston Churchill's time as MP for Dundee.

Not all of our digital resources are freely accessible at the moment. We hold subscriptions for over 50 electronic reference collections that contain hundreds of thousands of individual items, from digitised 15th-century rare books to modern newspaper collections. These are all accessible in the Library reading rooms on request, but more and more will also be found online. More details can be found via the 'search and browse' link on the website, and then through 'licensed digital collections'.

Another place well worth looking at

SHUTTERSTOCK

DISCOVER Some new ways to see NLS collections online



YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/user/NLofScotland

There are several short videos on NLS' YouTube site about trains in Scotland, a collection about Glasgow including pieces on the shipyards, mass council housing and even a gas mask drill at a local primary school.



FLICKR

www.flickr.com/photos/nlscotland/

An assortment of images from the Library's collections and exhibitions including Soviet propaganda posters, Phoebe Ann Traquair's illuminated manuscripts for Elizabeth Browning's sonnets, photographs and maps.



FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com

As a Facebook friend you will be able to visit the Library's Facebook page, get notification of forthcoming of events, watch videos and view photos and images. Just search Facebook for 'National Library of Scotland'.

is the Scottish Screen Archive. This is a fabulous resource and provides an online catalogue with around 4,500 items – 2,800 of these accessible for the first time on digital video. Hundreds of clips have been made freely available online, representing over 100 years of Scottish history. It's an incredibly eclectic collection and I would defy anyone not to find something of interest.

But it's not just on our own websites you can access our collections. We're really keen to embrace applications that people are already using, so you can find NLS material on YouTube and Flickr, and we now even have our own Facebook page.

You are currently involved in a long term project to collect all kinds of non-print materials. Can you tell us more? The Trusted Digital Repository Project was set up because we recognised that we needed somewhere to manage and preserve digital materials for the long term. We are keen that NLS should be seen as a trusted digital archive in the same way it is for printed material. We want to get to a position where other organisations in Scotland come to us to have their digital materials preserved.

In the future libraries will be collecting digital material in much the same way as they currently collect printed items. Are digital collections the same as their print equivalent?

Yes and no. In some cases there will be digital equivalents of existing print materials, but even then, some electronic

versions of books will be subtly different from the printed version. In the vast majority of cases, we are talking about collecting materials that were 'born' digital, such as websites.

Are there particular challenges presented by archiving websites?

Digital delights

Digital Library Systems Manager James Toon selects a few interesting curios from the digital library to get you started

THE WORD ON THE STREET

The *Word on the Street* archive is a whole set of mini-newspapers that were distributed in the 19th century and this first one always amazes me – it's about a husband selling his wife
tinyurl.com/6ev8zx

SOVIET POSTERS

Russian propaganda covering topics as diverse as Lenin's Five Year Plan and recommended breastfeeding hours
tinyurl.com/5s4rat

A LETTER FROM EDINBURGH

A fascinating film about road safety in Edinburgh. It's particularly pertinent, because it features trams, which of course are now making a comeback in our capital city
ssa.nls.uk/film.cfm?fid=7304

There are currently something like seven million websites in the UK, which means we have to be quite selective in what we archive. We're concentrating on material that is deemed of enduring value to the nation, so that could be JK Rowling's *Leaky Cauldron* website or blogs written by notable Scottish figures. Blogs are an interesting phenomenon and seen by many as the manuscripts of the future, and as such it's very important that these don't disappear into the digital ether.

As websites are updated on a regular basis all the old information is usually archived offline by their authors, or deleted. In order to preserve that information, we archive a selection of websites at least every six months.

What can NLS users expect from the digital library in the future?

We are working hard to help library users make more use of the online collections and are integrating more and more with the traditional library functions. Ideally we want to make the split between digital and print less obvious so that we are treating digital and print materials in the same way.

Recently we began piloting a new mass digitisation project using some of our Gaelic printed collections as a starting point.

NLS is setting the standard in Scotland with the way that we're been making our collections available, and we'll continue to look at new ways of opening up the library's archive to the public.

Access NLS online at www.nls.uk

Reeling in “the man that should”

With a body of bizarre and stylish films, was Enrico Coccozza a filmmaker ahead of his time, or simply an eccentric with a movie camera? **Mitch Miller** investigates



That Enrico Coccozza (1921-1997) is not a household name says a great deal about the fickle, pernicious nature of the filmmaker’s calling. The word ‘should’ haunts almost every aspect of his career.

Coccozza should have been Scotland’s great, native neo-realist filmmaker; he should have made a feature film (or several) on the grand scale; he should have been an ancestral figure to the famously avant garde David Lynch – moulded not by the harsh townscapes of Philadelphia but by the weathered sandstone streets of Wishaw.

There are many reasons why we should lament the obscurity of this eccentric, gnomic and highly imaginative filmmaker, whose odd, ambitious 16mm films await discovery in the Scottish Screen Archive. But there are also as many reasons to celebrate: his is a story that shows what can be achieved with nothing other than imagination, hard work and enthusiasm, and the films that survive him are frequently hilarious, occasionally frightening and effortlessly stylish.

Take for example, *Petrol* (1957), a bleak, vivid piece of cinematic poetry that Coccozza considered his finest work. A man drives along a deserted road, snaking through a moor of Brontë-esque bleakness. The engine sputters and seizes, so that the car slows to a halt. The driver gets out and flips the bonnet. Another man appears on the horizon. He approaches the driver and without any explanation confronts, and then murders him. Tossing the body in the back seat the man drives away, and we are back where we started. The end – but is it? Will this man also run out of fuel? Will another faceless stranger crest the horizon and perform his murderous task? Will there be an endless succession of murders?

Produced as a favour for two drama students, *Petrol* is Coccozza’s *bona fide* three-minute masterpiece. It epitomises his taste for horror and grimly indiscriminate existential misery, executed with a prodigious sense of assurance and mastery of film technique. It seems to have been an innate talent. Coccozza spent a summer at the famed *Centro Sperimentale Cinematografia* in Rome, the spiritual heart of Italian neo-realism as typified by



Left Coccozza’s passion for the moving image was evident in the volume of short films he made **Above** Ready for their close-up: local people were often drawn into Coccozza’s work



Petrol, a bleak example of cinematic poetry

Rossellini, de Sica and Antonioni, and claimed (falsely) to have been a cameraman for Jean Cocteau and King Vidor, but otherwise had no formal training. Another summer, this time working behind the counter of his parent's cafe, bought the teenage Coccozza a small cinematograph. From that moment he seems to have felt his way through the fundamentals of composing shots, editing scenes into a narrative and above all, cajoling those around him into helping him realise his personal visions. His scarce resources taught him the value of economy and simplicity, traits that make him a precedent for today's Independent cinema.

In 1997 the resulting trove of films were rescued from their precarious home above a Wishaw chip



The films that survive are hilarious, frightening and stylish

shop. Terrified of losing them to burning chip fat, Coccozza himself turned up at the archive with a pile of film cans, containing hidden delights that continue to be uncovered, one reel at a time. Between 1948 and 1960 he and his Connoisseur Film Circle conceived, scripted and produced around 50-60 shorts, everything from documentary to surrealist horror. His *oeuvre* includes *Chick's Day* (1951), a slice of Cagney relocated to the Wishaw slums; *Porphyria* (1959), an arch, metaphysical reworking of the Browning poem; *Bongo Erotico* (1959), the first Scottish film to feature a transvestite; *Robot Three* (1951), a grisly science fiction horror and *Glasgow Docklands* (1956), a superior documentary film that provided many iconic images of working class life.

All of these were shot with next to no money and a non-professional cast. The films were silent and the soundtrack – usually a commentary or internal monologue – was added later, with local musicians and amateur composers persuaded into contributing a score. Filming was on borrowed time and frequently interrupted by curious or hostile locals. Connoisseur consisted of local cinephiles recruited mostly from the patrons of the Belhaven, the Wishaw café his Italian emigré parents operated. Unsuspecting Wishavians such as Jim Craig could innocently pop into the Belhaven for a pack of cigarettes and, weeks later, find themselves crawling up the staircase to hell, as in *Nine O'Clock* (1951), or like George Cuthbertson, buried alive by the Faerie Queen in *The White Lady* (1948).



ENRICO during filming with a friend of Sir Anthony Perkins.



A young Enrico Coccozza with his father and mother - who inspired the story of Mrs Joe.

The catalyst was Coccozza, but the Belhaven provided the raw materials. Its takings (provided by Coccozza's superhumanly indulgent mother) were a steady source of funds for his many extracurricular schemes. In his semi-fictional novel *Assunta* (1987), he describes, in typically modest style, the atmosphere of those times: 'Within a year, Rico made a name for himself as an outstanding and imaginative producer of fantasy films, winning many national awards. The phone never stopped ringing. It was like living in a little Hollywood.'

'Little Hollywood' consisted of a 100-seater cinema built in the back, with sound stages for indoor shoots and a thriving film society, attracting members from all over Lanarkshire. Craig, who scripted and co-directed *Nine O'Clock* and many other Connoisseur films, still chuckles

LIFE AND TIMES
Cuttings from the local newspaper, The Wishaw Press, show Coccozza as filmmaker and as a young boy

at the controversies they stirred up among the filmmaking establishment. *Chick's Day* (scandalous in 1951 for its use of the F-word) plays its sordid crime melodrama subplot entirely straight, and with considerable finesse. The image of its titular anti-hero staggering across Wishaw's cobbles – under a sky becoming ever more bruised and foreboding as his sins accumulate – is the stuff of true cinema. And it was noticed. Professional commissions came from the Films of Scotland Committee, set up initially by the 'father of documentary' John Grierson to make

In the Archives

Enrico Coccozza, filmmaker
born Glasgow 1921 – died Wishaw 1997

The Scottish Screen Archive holds over 80 of Coccozza's films together with a collection of his papers including press cuttings and details of the Scottish Amateur Film Festival's adjudication comments.

A selection of Coccozza's most unusual and indicative films

1. *Fantasmagoria* (1948)
2. *Chick's Day* (1949-1950)
3. *Nine O'Clock* (1951)
- Robot Three* (1951)
- Masquerade* (1953)
- Glasgow's Docklands* (1956)
- Petrol* (1957)
- Corky* (1958)
4. *Bongo Erotico* (1959)



films of educational and social merit. Forsyth Hardy, Scotland's leading film critic, was effusive in his praise, and shorts such as *Chick's Day* and *Crabbit Granny* (1956) were programmed in selected cinemas across the UK. His ability to turn a local country park into a parallel dimension, a local shop girl into a femme fatale, or himself into a presiding Satan hinted at his potential to create extraordinary images and tell unconventional stories. But it went largely unrealised. So why is Coccozza the man who *should*?

There is the seductive explanation that a 1950s, Scottish-Italian David Lynch, more suited to an American or Continental European film market, was a man born out of his time, too much of an outsider for a British film industry wedded to realist dramas and documentaries. Certainly Coccozza was frustrated in trying to find work beyond newsreels and education films. He churned his own shorts out by the dozen, stuffed his mantelpiece with awards and Little Hollywood's phone rocked on its cradle, but the call to make bigger, more ambitious films never materialised.

Perhaps he could have moved to London and its wider opportunities, but he was too tied to his mother (his father having died in 1947) and equally, too comfortable in his job at Glasgow University. Around 1960, he put down his camera for nearly 15 years, returning to it briefly in the 1970s, finally making a series of near-impenetrable 'videograms' in the 80s. Gradually, he fizzled out.

But if he did, Coccozza himself must take some responsibility. For one thing, he was fatally self-conscious. In his voiceover for *The Mirror* he advises the viewer not to '... take too much notice of this shot; we just put it in to pad out the film a bit,' while he cheerfully described *Porphyria* as 'pretentious as all the rest'. Throughout his career, Coccozza passed off his films as mere jokes. Many, clearly were, such as *Ad Infernum Buddy* (a Wishaw version of *Quo Vadis* made in 1952), but too often the humour is negative, defensive – an excuse for when his experiments didn't pay off or when people laughed at him.

It was hard to be Cocteau in a mining town, surrounded by what James Boswell described as the 'sarcastical vivacity' in which Scots excelled. What else was there to do but pretend you were as sarcastic as all the rest? But to create truly great films, you need to embrace failure, and cannot be afraid to appear pretentious or foolish because at some point, you must. By taking refuge in irony so often and so completely, Coccozza made it near impossible for audiences to take his work seriously.



An actor's view:
Coccozza filming
Nine O'Clock

Amateur Film at the SSA

The Scottish Screen Archive is home to many different types of amateur filmmaking. Spanning almost a century, the films capture unique insights into family life and holidays, work life and industry, travel and leisure, wartime and religion and many other topics including fictional and drama films made by amateur film groups. In 1933 the Scottish Amateur Film Festival (SAFF)

was born and for the first time amateur filmmakers were provided with a platform on which to exhibit their films to other filmmakers, and uniquely, have their work scrutinised by a film industry professional such as Alfred Hitchcock. Many of these prizewinning films are held at the Scottish Screen Archive with accompanying papers detailing film entries,

prizewinners and adjudicators' comments. The archive also holds substantial collections of hobby filmmaking and the work of various cine and film societies throughout Scotland, together with amateur films, recording industry and industrial practices, propaganda and socialist movements, fictional dramas and even travelling evangelists.



Perhaps he could have moved to London but he was too tied to his mother

And there *were* outlets sympathetic to his type of filmmaking in Britain. We think of the 1950s as bland and conformist, but this was the decade of Free Cinema (1953-57), that produced Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson, who all started as amateurs. Experimental and irreverent, there are many affinities between Free Cinema and Coccozza. In his introduction to the 1957 programme Lindsay Anderson might have been describing the best of what Coccozza created from the grit and grime of industrial Wishaw.

'With a 16mm camera, and minimal resources, and no payment for your technicians, you cannot achieve very much in commercial terms. You cannot make a feature film, and your possibilities of experiment are severely restricted. But you can use your eyes and ears. You can give indications. You can make poetry.'



A valuable early 19th-century thought to have been lost for discovers, the manuscript's misappropriation to eventua

In 2002, over 220 rare and valuable books from the Scottish Beekeepers' Association's Moir Library were placed on long-term deposit at the National Library of Scotland. Among the collection is a manuscript by the Rev. James Playfair entitled: *Of the Care and Knowledge of Bees. Their Management and Natural History Containing an Account of the Singular Mode of Generation by which they are Produced.*

Playfair states in the manuscript's preface that he came to take an interest in beekeeping at around the age of 50 because of an 'infirm state of health' which 'directed me to point my attention to the study of bees, as an amusement...' He must have been a skilled beekeeper as he reports, 'I could have paid the rent of a poor man's house with the profits from them, and something more, besides all expenses, ever since I began to turn my attention to them.'

The manuscript was completed in 1804 and Playfair clearly intended it be the largest and most comprehensive English language book published on the subject. In its historical context, with the exception of Gilles Bazin's *Histoire Naturelle des Abeilles* (published in both French and English in 1744) and the English translation of Jan Swammerdam's *Bybel der natuur* (1758), this was the first English work to seriously deal with the anatomy of the bee.

Biography

Playfair was born in Cuthie, Perthshire in 1752 and was Minister of the parish of Bendochy near Coupar Angus from 1785 to 1812, the year of his death. Before coming to Bendochy he served as an Assistant Minister at Glamis, as Deputy Chaplain of the Royal Glasgow Volunteers and saw service as a chaplain to the forces in the West Indies.

Written in the author's hand, the text is very legible and runs to 290 pages. The manuscript is in the form of a 'fair copy' intended for typesetting in a publishing house, and contains detailed instructions to the printer regarding the size of font to be used and the number of pages required.

The statement in the preface, 'this book, like bees, goes out into the world fatherless and friendless,' aptly sums up its historical transmission. According to an 1875 publication by Charles Rogers, Playfair 'composed a work on the culture and management of bees the [manuscript] of which was destroyed by fire in the printing office; he had bestowed 20 years on its preparation and could not be induced to make an effort towards retrieving his loss.'

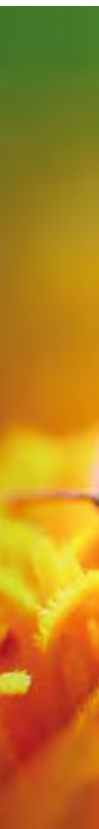
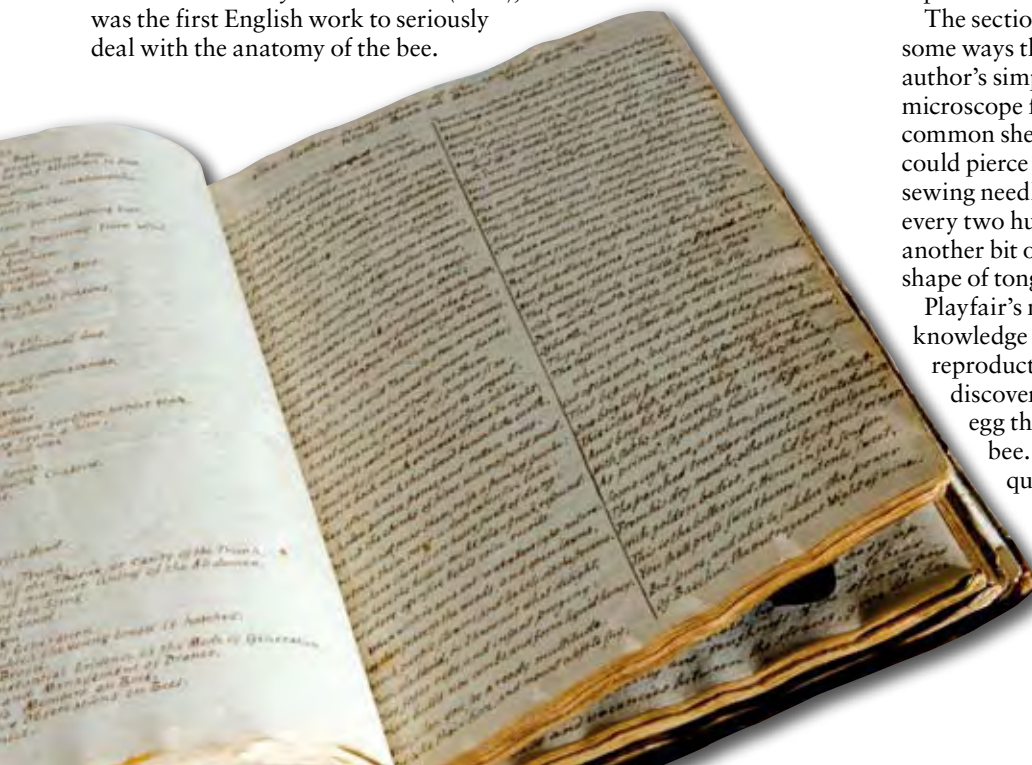
Evidently, the manuscript was neither destroyed by fire nor misappropriated by a London publisher, as another source claimed. It seems to have been returned to the Playfair family, where it remained until it was presented to the East of Scotland Beekeepers' Association in the mid-20th century.

The manuscript opens with a translation of what the author terms the 'useful parts' of Virgil's book on bees: *Georgics, Book IV*. This is followed by an extensive treatise attempting to cover almost every aspect of beekeeping and bee anatomy.

The section of the book devoted to anatomy is in some ways the most interesting and impressive. The author's simple apparatus consisted of a pocket microscope focus mounted on a self-made stand; common shears sharpened by himself until they could pierce and cut with sufficient accuracy; a sewing needle; a piece of tinned plate graduated to every two hundredths of an inch for measuring, and another bit of thin-tinned plate converted into the shape of tongs for the purpose of catching bees.

Playfair's most serious departure from modern knowledge is in his understanding of bee reproduction. He knows and accepts the discovery that bees can raise a queen from an egg that would otherwise produce a worker bee. Yet he declares that all bees, except queens, are males.

Playfair concludes with chapters commenting on volume five of René-Antoine Réaumur's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des insectes* (1740) and François Huber's *Nouvelles*



document on **beekeeping** was revered, but, as James Mitchell survived rumours of fire and eventually find its way into NLS' care



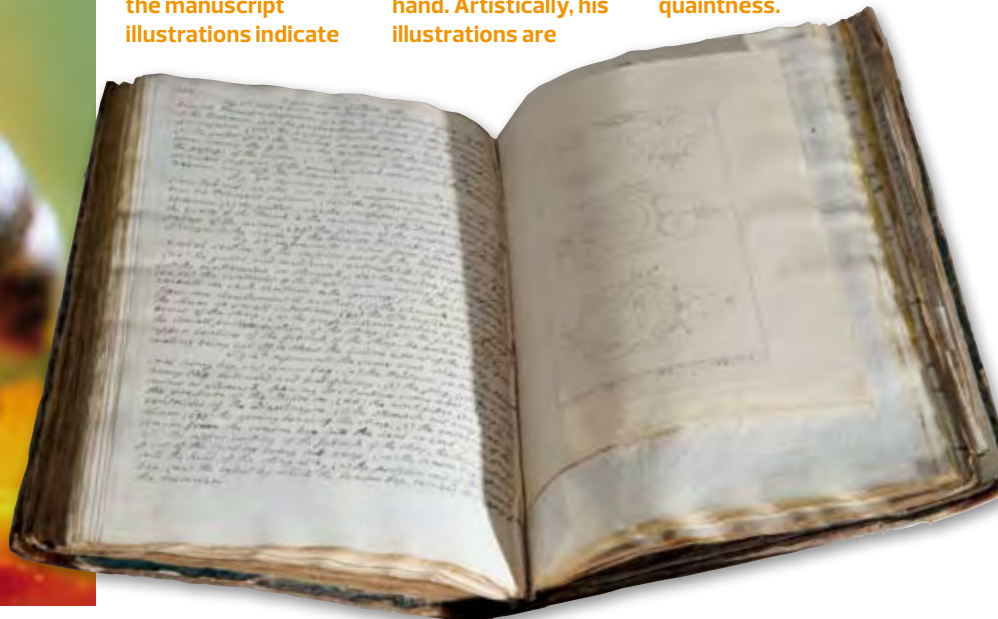
Bees provided
'amusement'

An anatomist of noteworthy skill

Although Playfair does not discuss his specific techniques for dissection, the manuscript illustrations indicate

he studied bee anatomy very carefully and saw a great deal of it at first hand. Artistically, his illustrations are

an interesting combination of both close realism and geometrical quaintness.



observations sur les abeilles (1792). The chapter on Huber deals at length with Huber's experiments, the conclusions of which Playfair rejects.

Huber's work was largely accepted in Edinburgh around the turn of the 18th century and if publishers receiving the manuscript submitted it to one or more referees, Playfair's rejection of Huber's observations would have been problematic. The followers of beekeeper and writer Robert Huish (1777-1850) might have favoured it in London, but scientific errors throughout Playfair's text would have worked against it. Playfair was a strong individualist who preferred to rely upon himself and either did not know, or chose to disregard, earlier writing on bees and beekeeping. It was this that ultimately hindered the manuscript's publication.

Although Playfair's understanding of bee



**This book,
like bees,
goes out into
the world
fatherless
and
friendless**



reproduction is inaccurate, and his interpretation of bee behaviour strongly anthropomorphic, it is only fair to judge him in the light of his time. It is a pity that Playfair did not publish his volume, at least in part. Playfair's observational ability, his industry, and his noteworthy manual skill are evidence that he was, potentially, an anatomist of genius.

FURTHER READING IN THE NLS COLLECTION

Playfair's manuscript Shelfmark MRB.214

The Scottish Beekeeper Magazine HJ3.2059

Beveridge, John. *Beekeeping in Angus last century.*

Address delivered at the annual meeting of the

East of Scotland Beekeepers' Association...

(Dundee, 1940) 5.896

Dunfermline Beekeepers' Association.

Beekeeping in Dunfermline and West Fife

(Dunfermline, 1988) HP2.88.3200

Moir Rare Book Collection www.nls.uk/moir

Peter Arnott's work has been shaped by the Archive



Destination unknown

John Murrery Archive Writer in Residence
Peter Arnott reflects on how exploring NLS has influenced his approach to writing

At the beginning of February this year I took up my post at NLS, and was excited about what I could do with it. What I wasn't expecting was what the Archive would do to me. In case that sounds ominous, it wasn't anything bad. It was just that I started with a fairly instrumental attitude to the collection: I would burrow around in there looking for stuff I could use, primarily for a schools project I'm putting together with TAG Theatre Company and NLS education staff in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

I would educate myself in the byways of evolutionary theory and its historical context in order to put together workshop and performance activity. Though challenging, this was familiar territory, and, as far as the Library was concerned, meant that I would be like any other researcher who penetrates these walls.

But I'm resident. So my attitude didn't have to be so crudely instrumental. I didn't have to know what I wanted to find before I started looking. Take Caroline Norton, for example: a Murray author, a theatrical Irish beauty and society wit entangled with high Whigs and Low Tories, a poet, a campaigner for women's right of access to their

children and to own property. It had BBC Two written all over it. So I went in there with that kind of head on... and didn't find what I was looking for, or, rather, what I knew television producers would be looking for from me.

What I found was something else. A woman bereft of her marriage and social support using a meagre talent as a writer to hack a living, and forge a public personality that would give her the means and position to regain some of her relationship to her children. Not a heroine, in other words. Not a genius. But a complex, contradictory human being. BBC Two wouldn't be interested, but I was.

And that got me thinking about archives, libraries, and what they're for, to think about the past, and its expression through documents, and how they have survived, and how they might be able to speak to us in semi-theatrical ways. I am performing a couple of these experiments in public, the first of which – an exploration of Caroline Norton – took place in October. I'll be conducting a similar experiment with some of the Murray Darwin material in February.

I find myself evolving a form hopefully suggested by the Archive itself, rather than imposing a pseudo-historical voice. While, on the other hand, I've been talking to NLS' Corporate Services about theatrical metaphors – a surreal experience for all concerned. I wasn't expecting either of those outcomes when I started, but I'm looking forward to being led in more and more unexpected directions. Surprise, it turns out, is what exploring an archive is all about.



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Mastering manuscripts



Whether it is a scrawl or an overly ornate script, palaeography, or the study

of old handwriting, can be a tantalising and frustrating business. Senior Manuscripts Curator **Olive Geddes** has more experience than most, and offers advice for those struggling in the margins

Read around the document

1 The process of trying to get to grips with someone's handwriting has been likened to playing a round of golf. Before you take your shot, you need to tee it up and address the ball. If you are finding a specific word difficult to decipher, don't just look at it in isolation. Start at the beginning of the document and read through, so that you become familiar with the style of handwriting.

Context is everything

2 Learning something about the background of your document can be beneficial. For example, prior to the 19th-century people often wrote phonetically, so you should expect to see quite a variance in spelling in handwriting older than a couple of hundred years, especially when it comes to personal names and place names.

Many types of documents are written to formulas and include standard phrases. If you are able to identify what kind of document you are trying to read and know the phrases that are likely to appear, this can aid the deciphering process. Similarly, being able to recognise commonly used abbreviations can be very helpful.

Learn handwriting styles

3 Before the 19th-century, people learned how to write by being taught specific handwriting styles. This means there are particular types of handwriting you can look out for. Early manuscripts may be written in gothic or text hand, which is very formal and regular. Court hand – a form first used by legal and administrative offices in the Middle Ages – tends to be more cursive.

Secretary handwriting was developed in the 16th century. This administrative and business 'shorthand' was used throughout western Europe, and although it might initially look quite difficult to read, if you learn to recognise the different letter forms you can come to understand it quite easily.

3 final tips

- Have a good Scots dictionary, a glossary and gazeteer to hand.
- If you get stuck, look to see if you have already deciphered the letter or word elsewhere. If not, leave it out and move on. Work on a few more lines, then go back and try again.
- If you've deciphered all of the letters in a word, but it still doesn't make sense, try reading it out loud.



Words of devotion

The Iona Psalter dates from c.1180–1220. It was probably produced in Oxford for Beatrix, the first Prioress of the Augustinian nunnery of Iona and the daughter of Somerled, the Lord of the Isles. Her possession of such a prestigious text indicates the power Beatrix had.

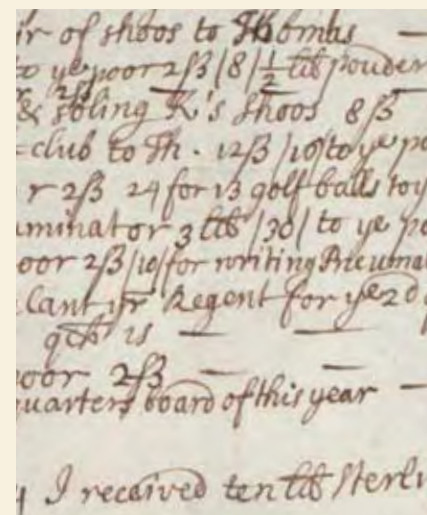
◆ SHELFMARK MS.10000



Personal thoughts

This letter was written by Henry Holland circa 1810. A personal document, this was not written for posterity and as such the writing tended not to be so precise. Paper and postage were expensive so Holland 'crossed' his writing to save space, making the document more difficult to read.

◆ Acc.7515



Student spending

These are accounts drawn up in 1714 by James Morice, a tutor at St Andrews University. They detail monies spent by his students, sons of John Mackenzie of Delvine. The text includes phonetically spelled words ('shoos' for shoes), and abbreviations ('novr' for November).

◆ MS.1400, f.253r

NLS' extensive collection encompasses an extraordinarily diverse range of materials. What would you find if you searched for the words **“Robert Burns”** in the catalogue?



1

BURNS IN BRAILLE

A selection of Burns' poems and songs translated into braille by pupils of the Czech Republic in 1999. The work includes a glossary of Scots to English to Czech words.



2

THE ROBERT BURNS MAP

This 1976 map published by John Bartholomew & Sons Ltd shows Kilmarnock at the time of Burns with photographs of houses and towns associated with the poet.

BROADSIDE BALLAD

A broadside is a large piece of paper, usually printed on one side and folded into a smaller size. 'Bonny Mary of Argyll' was published between 1860 and 1880 by James Lindsay of Glasgow. The song, written by two Englishmen, takes as its subject Burn's 'Highland Mary'.

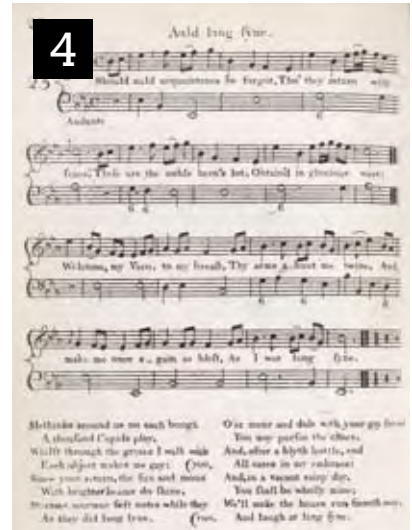


3

Bonny Mary of ARCYLE.

I have heard the mavis singing,
Its love song to the morn,
I have seen the dew-drop clinging
To the rose just newly born;
But a sweeter song has cheered me
At the evening's gentle close,
And I've seen an eye still brighter
Than the dew-drop on the rose.
'Twas thy voice, my gentle Mary
And thy artless winning smile,
That made this world an Eden,
Bonnie Mary of Argyll

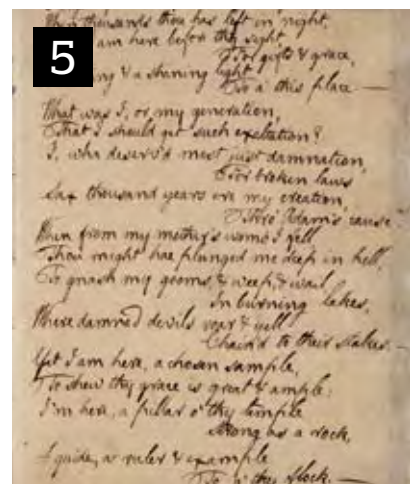
Tho' thy voice may lose its sweetness
And thine eye its brightness too,
Tho' thy step may lo-o its swiftness
And thine hair its sunny hue;
Still to me thou wilt be dearer
Than all the world shall own;
I have loved thee for thy beauty
But not for that alone:
I have watched thy heart dear Mary
And its doodness was the wile,
That has made thee mine for ever
Bonnie Mary of Argyll



4

AULD LANG SYNE

A variety of airs and lyrics have been published under the name 'Auld Lang Syne'. Debate still rages over the origins of the original tune.



5

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER

1784 to 1785 was one of Burns's most prolific periods. In these years he wrote such well-known poems as 'To A Mouse' and 'Holy Willie's Prayer' (shown here in manuscript form).