



FIRST TO THE POLE? POLAR PUNCH-UP IN THE PRESS

DISCOVER

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland | www.nls.uk | Issue 14 Winter 2009



THE LIBRARY'S
QUEST FOR
SPACE

THE FIGHT
AGAINST
VOTES FOR
WOMEN

GIANT ATLAS
ARRIVES AT NLS



The Lyon in Mourning
An insider's
account of the
1745 rebellion



A CELEBRATION OF SCOTLAND ON STAGE

Scottish theatre and its international impact

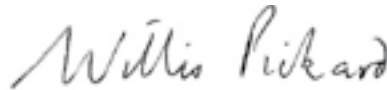
Historic tales to treasure from shelf to stage

As the cliché says, the winter nights have well and truly drawn in but there is plenty in this new issue of *Discover NLS* to keep the cold from the door. We find out how the struggle to claim the North Pole was depicted in the postcards and cartoons of the time. Then closer to home, theatre critic Mark Fisher enjoys a sneak preview of the Library's new exhibition, *Curtain Up: 40 Years of Scottish Theatre*, taking in bold works from the heady 1970s right up to recent stage hit *Black Watch*.

We also have the first in our new series of articles on NLS treasures. These are unique pieces displayed in a special space at the George IV Bridge building. In this issue we explore the first-hand history of the 1745 Jacobite rising and the flight of Bonnie Prince Charlie as told by a clergyman, Robert Forbes, in his *Lyon in Mourning*.

Every item in the Library is a treasure to some degree, however, and that's why we think carefully about how we store them all, as well as how we can free up yet more space to contain our growing collections. I was given an insight into the challenge facing us as I discovered just how many miles of space – and how much money – are saved using innovative storage methods, as my article in this issue explains.

It is one of the satisfactions of being a member of the Board of Trustees to learn of practical down-to-earth initiatives as well as the scholarship displayed by members of staff.



Willis Pickard
Member of the National Library of Scotland's Board of Trustees



These are unique pieces displayed in a special space



DISCOVER NLS
ISSUE 14 WINTER 2009

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CorpComms Awards 2009

★ **CUSTOMER MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR**
PPA Scotland Awards 2009

Three ways to interact with NLS online

1

FACEBOOK
Keep up to date with the Library, and become our fan by adding your own comments. Remember, you need to set up your own Facebook account before you can access us.



2

TWITTER
Twitter is the online social network service that allows users to post brief news updates. You can read NLS tweets on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/natlibscot>

3

YOUTUBE
Watch films from NLS' Scottish Screen Archive via the YouTube website. You can rate your favourite reels and leave comments on www.youtube.com/user/NLofScotland

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The latest NLS news and comment. In this issue: Library acquires giant atlas, NLS wins awards, latest accessibility initiatives and upcoming events

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The debate surrounding which explorer was first to the North Pole spilled out into a range of printed paraphernalia, as John Bowles illustrates

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The Library's treasures display features Jacobites' eyewitness accounts, as reported by church minister Robert Forbes

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Willis Pickard investigates how the Library manages to contain an unceasingly expanding collection of books, manuscripts and other objects

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Playwright and artist John Byrne



Controversy raged as two teams lodged competing claims to being first at the top of the world
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Contributors to this issue include



Helen Vincent
A Senior Curator in the Rare Book Collections Division, Helen has been researching women's suffrage



Clare Harris
Clare writes on social affairs in Scotland and beyond. She has contributed to a range of newspapers and magazines



Rab Jackson
Rab is NLS' Preservation & Conservation Manager and chairs a national group on archival boxmaking



Chris Fleet
Chris is the Temporary Map Collections Manager at NLS and has been involved in the Library's digital mapping initiatives

Using the National Library of Scotland

Inside NLS

With a collection of around 16 million printed items, two million maps, 32,000 films, 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 order up items from the collections, you need to hold a Library Card.

An application form can be picked up at George IV Bridge or the Causewayside Building, or downloaded from www.nls.uk. To complete your application you will need proof of identity (a driving licence, passport or matriculation card are all valid) and a recent

utilities bill. Photos, for identification purposes, can be taken at Readers' Registration.

Viewing material

With a Library Card you gain access to the reading rooms, from where you can view material held in the Library's collections. Requests for items can be made in



person, by telephone on 0131 623 3700, by email: enquiries@nls.uk, or through the Library website at www.nls.uk. 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

Digital resources

From articles on sport to Parliamentary Papers, NLS' licensed digital collections are a superb research tool

Art and literature

The Library's digital collections relating to art and literature include *** 19th Century UK Periodicals Part 1. Women's, Children's, Humour and Leisure/Sport; British Literary Manuscripts Online c.1660-1900; Naxos Music Library; Oxford Music Online; Perdita Manuscripts - Women Writers, 1500-1700; RILM Abstracts of Music Literature; Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period and SCRAN Digital Materials.**

Business

NLS has a wide range of online resources for businesses, including **Business Insights (Reuters); * COBRA-The Complete Business**

Reference Adviser; Factiva; FAME - information on over 2.4 million of the largest UK and Irish companies; *** Frost & Sullivan; * Global Reference Solution; Hoovers; Key Note Market Research;** product and services database **Kompass Database; Market Research Monitor** and **Mintel Market.**

Education, science and social science

Educational resources include **ALPSP Learned Journals Collection; Blackwell Compass Journals; Electronic Enlightenment; * Environment Index; * GreenFILE; JSTOR** - a collection of leading academic journals; *** MLA International**

Bibliography; Oxford Journals Online; Science Full Text Select; * Standards Infobase and **Web of Knowledge.**

Government and official

A wealth of political information can be viewed online, including **18th Century Official Parliamentary Publications Portal 1688-1834; * Early English Books Online (EEBO); House of Commons Parliamentary Papers; Public Information Online** and *** Making of Modern Law - Legal Treatises 1800-1926.**

History, biography and genealogy

You can access *** 17th & 18th Century Burney Collection; * 19th Century British Library Newspapers; * 19th Century**

UK Periodicals - Part 2. Empire: Travel and Anthropology, Economics, Missionary and Colonial; British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries; Celtic Culture - A Historical Encyclopedia (via NetLibrary); InfoTrac - custom newspapers featuring titles from around the world; **John Johnson Collection: an archive of printed ephemera** - Digitised images from the ephemera collection of the Bodleian Library; *** Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB); India, Raj & Empire; * Sabin Americana, 1500-1926; * Making of the Modern World; * Times Digital Archive; Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers & Periodicals**

1800-1900 which is a bibliography of publications, personal names, issuing bodies and subjects; and *** Who's Who (and Who Was Who).**

For more information: www.nls.uk/collections/digital/resources

works, massive full-text facsimiles and business databases (see below for more details). Many of these resources are available over the internet to readers living in Scotland (although certain restrictions do apply to some collections, in line with licence agreements). Your first port of call to access the Library's online collection is at www.nls.uk/collections/digital/resources

Visitor Centre

NLS' George IV Bridge building boasts a new Visitor Centre. Opened earlier in the year, the centre features an exhibition space, a shop selling books, stationery and gift items, a café and PC terminals with access to NLS catalogues and other digital facilities.

NLS location

FILMS

Scottish Screen Archive
39–41 Montrose Avenue
Hillington Park
Glasgow G52 4LA
Tel 0845 366 4600
Email ssaenquiries@nls.uk

MAPS

Causewayside Building
33 Salisbury Place
Edinburgh EH9 1SL
Tel 0131 623 3970
Email maps@nls.uk
Mon–Fri 9.30am–5pm (Wed 10am–5pm), Sat 9.30am–1pm

ALL OTHER COLLECTIONS

George IV Bridge
Edinburgh EH1 1EW
Tel 0131 623 3700
Email enquiries@nls.uk
Mon–Fri 9.30am–8.30pm (Wed 10am–8.30pm), Sat 9.30am–1pm



George Washington and his army (who can be found in ECCO) cross the Delaware River

Reference works and catalogues

* **Credo Reference** gives you access to 400 high-quality reference books from the world's leading publishers. Other online reference works available via NLS include
* **Early American Imprints, Series 1 – Evans, 1639–1800;**
* **Early English Books Online 1475–1700 (EEBO);**
* **Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)**

and * **Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) Part 2; Oxford English Dictionary Online and Oxford Reference Online**, which contains over 200 reference works.

* All collections can be accessed through the electronic resources search service at the Library. Collections that are marked with a * can also be accessed outwith the Library (although some require registration for remote access).

Horrid Murder.



A Full True and Particular Account of a Cruel and Dreadful MURDER, committed on the Bodies of Two ORPHAN CHILDREN, by Mrs LONG, their Mother-in-law, at Gainsboro', in Lincolnshire, on the 26th January, 1824, and who also attempted to Cut her own Throat.

THE following surprising and solemn miracle attended with so awful a judgment, will make a deep impression on the minds of a discerning public. It displays the abhorrence of Divine Providence, against wicked actions committed as it were in defiance of Omnipotency. Numbers are astonished that such a wretched woman should have existence, but more when they hear the barbarous and inhuman act of cruelty she perpetrated upon Three poor Orphan Children, to inherit a large property that was left them at the death of their own father, Mr Long, an independant Gentleman, at Gainsbro'. When he was upon his dying bed, he sent for his three lovely children, Samuel, Sarah, and Jane, all under ten years of age, and begged of his wife to bring them up in the fear of God, which she faithfully promised him she would do, but shortly after his death she became acquainted with one Mr J. B. r, a young gentleman from the country, which soon made her forget her promises, and instead of behaving to them in a motherly manner, she was always forming a plan to destroy them for the sake of their fortune, when one day she received a note from the young gentleman,

A COPY OF HIS LETTER.

“ Dear Madam,—I have taken the opportunity of writing a few lines to let you know that I have been thinking of what has been between you and me the other day, about changing our situation, but I can by no means think of marrying a woman with three children, and you say you have no other property but what is left to them.

A broadside report of a murder committed in 1824

FOCUS ON Newspapers Collection

The Library's newspapers collection is one of the largest in the UK. It is also the largest in Scotland. Thanks to the legal deposit privilege, the Library can request a copy of every newspaper published in Scotland. NLS also receives a copy of the main national titles published in the UK. The collections include a representative sample of the UK's regional press and a selection of overseas newspapers.

The Library also holds the earliest newspaper printed in Scotland, incomplete runs of important 18th-century Scottish titles and 19th-century provincial papers and a selection of early newspapers from all parts of Scotland, ranging from *The Shetland Journal* (1836) to *The Ayr and Wigtonshire Courier* (1818).

NLS also holds some newspapers on microfilm to help reduce the handling of rare and fragile material. For more information go to www.nls.uk/collections/newspapers

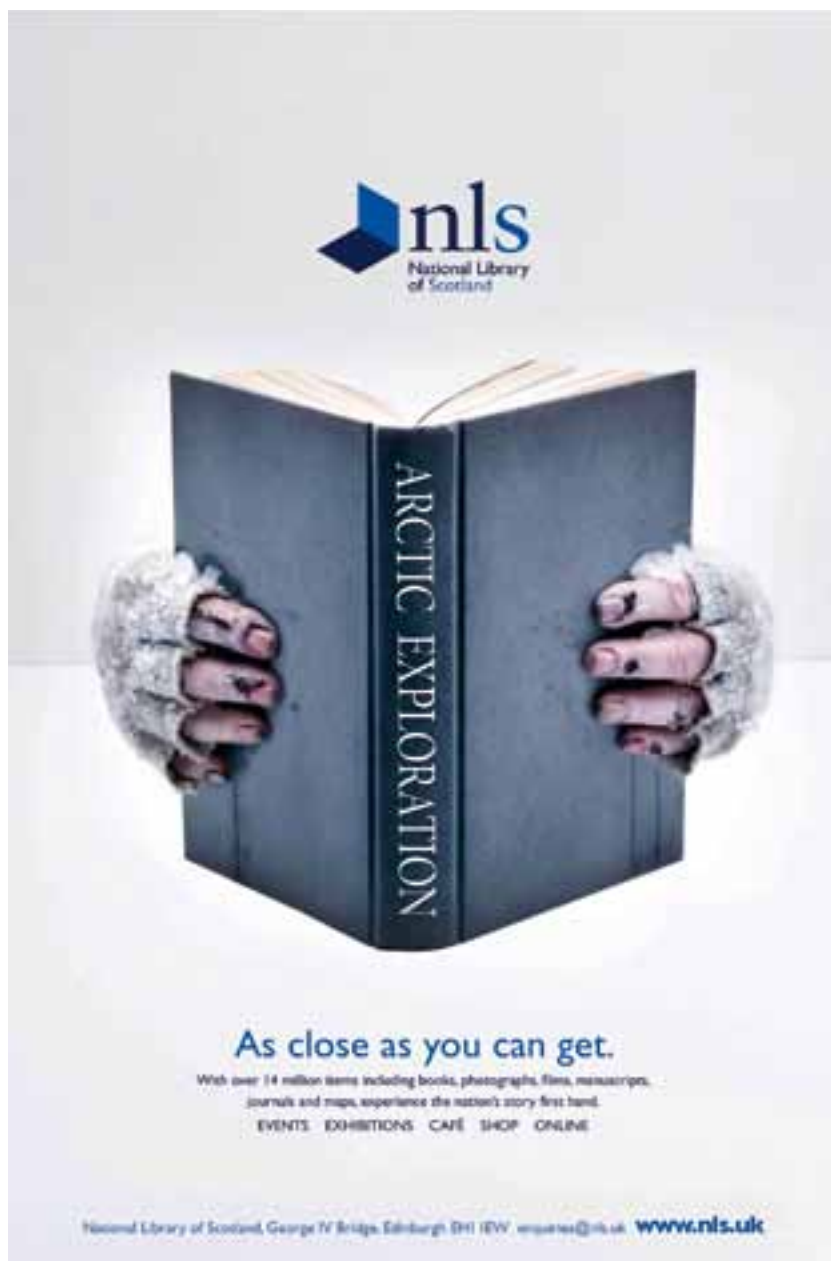
AWARDS

Discover NLS success

Just before this issue went to press we learned that *Discover NLS* had picked up awards at two recent ceremonies. On 25 November, the magazine was named 'Best Corporate Publication – Not-for-profit & Public Sector Companies' at the CorpComms Awards. The following night, the magazine won 'Customer Magazine of the Year' at the Periodical Publishers Association (PPA) Scotland Awards, an event that celebrates the Scottish magazine industry. *Discover NLS* has also

been shortlisted for 'Customer Magazine of the Year' at the Independent Publisher Awards.

In October, NLS' 'As close as you can get' press campaign picked up a Commendation in the 'Press Campaign' category at the Scottish Advertising Awards. The event brings together advertising agencies and those producing creative advertising work across Scotland. The NLS campaign consists of a range of advertisements, each featuring a different pair of hands holding open an appropriate book.



One of the advertisements in the 'As close as you can get' campaign



NLS Map Curator
Paula Williams with
a copy of *Earth*

BY THE NUMBERS

479

microfilm reels of 15th–17th century 'Scandinavian Culture Series' imprints are held in the Library's Scandinavian microform collections. Find out more at www.nls.uk/collections/foreign/scandinavian.html

MALCOLM COCHRANE



COLLECTIONS

Giant atlas at NLS

The largest atlas in modern production has arrived at the Library having travelled half way round the world from Australian publishers Millennium House. *Earth* weighs in at a hefty 19 kilograms, and some of its gate-fold images measure 1.8 metres. Issued as a limited edition of 3,000 (2,000 blue and 1,000 gold volumes), the publishers will smash the plates to ensure no further copies are available. Scottish firm The XYZ Digital Map Company had input into the award-winning cartography, which is further illustrated by specially commissioned full colour photographs. The atlas is currently displayed in the Causewayside Building, where all our map collections are housed, and has its own special perspex stand, positioned at a perfect height for browsing.

ACCESSIBILITY

Help for hard of hearing

Arts and disability charity Artlink, the Fruitmarket Gallery, Talbot Rice Gallery and NLS have jointly purchased a portable loop system. The system helps those with hearing difficulties by reducing, or cutting out, background noise.

This initiative is part of the In the Loop programme, which aims to make the arts more accessible to people who are hard of hearing.

The new equipment will be available for organised group visits and at public talks, removing the frustration of not being able to hear the speaker.

The programme was launched at an event at the Library, which included an introductory talk on deaf awareness and the role of hearing dogs. Since the launch, the new portable loop system has been used for guided tours of NLS exhibitions, at special events, and on

Doors Open Day.

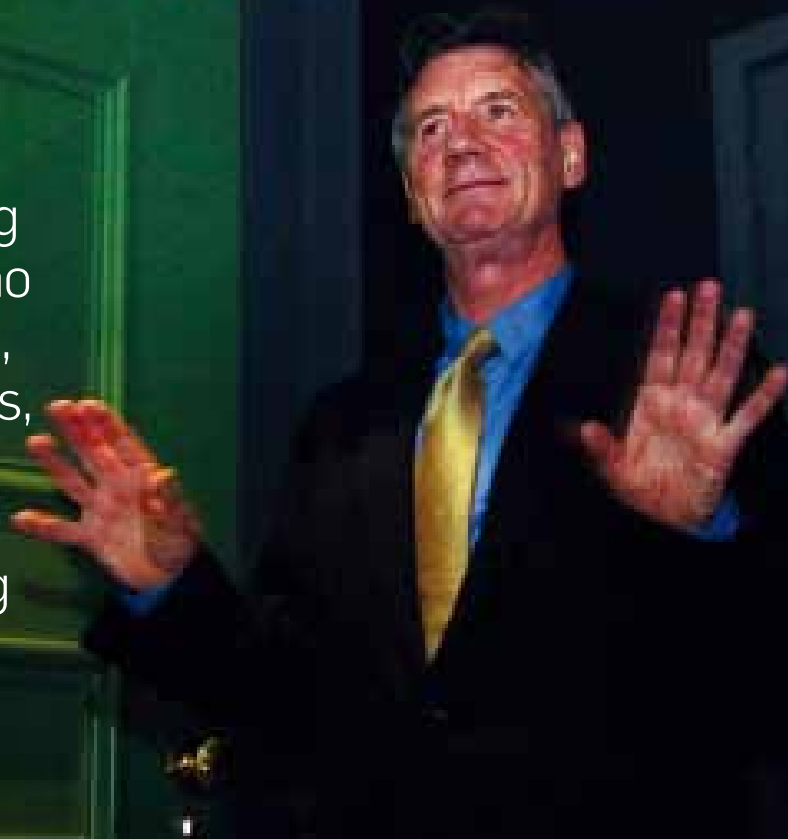
NLS is committed to ensuring its collections can be enjoyed by as many people as possible and will continue to work closely with Artlink to develop tailored events and to increase access to the public programme.

Find out more about Artlink at www.artlinkedinburgh.co.uk



The John Murray Archive is a uniquely rich collection, bringing together travellers who were poets, politicians, scientists, missionaries, archaeologists and adventurers, who all shared the gift of being able to write.

MICHAEL PALIN



Michael Palin pictured at the opening of the Library's John Murray Archive exhibition space

Support your National Library

IDEAS THAT SHAPED THE WORLD VISIONS THAT MAKE THE FUTURE

Establishing the John Murray Archive within the National Library of Scotland will cost £33.2 million. To date over £29 million has been raised. Help us raise the final 10% needed to ensure this world-class archive is secure for future generations.

To find out more about how you can support the campaign please contact

Development Office, National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW
Email development@nls.uk or telephone 0131 623 3804

www.nls.uk/jma

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CURATOR'S CHOICE

'If war breaks out, men alone can fight it out'

Helen Vincent, Senior Rare Books Curator, on anti-suffrage pamphlets

One of the most interesting aspects of our collections is the wide range of opinions that you can find in them. Thanks to centuries of legal deposit and our aim to collect everything relevant to Scotland, arguments from every side of any political debate are documented.

So when I first started researching our printed collections for a series of education projects on the Women's Suffrage Movement, the anti-suffrage material I found fascinated me. It's easy today to understand why women wanted the right to vote. But why did people object?

One box of pamphlets provided some answers. They come from the Library of the Scottish National Anti-Suffrage League, one of a number of anti-suffrage societies set up to combat the pro-suffrage campaigners. Ironically many of its chief members were women, including leading Scottish aristocrat Lady Tullibardine (who as Duchess of Atholl would become the first female Scottish MP - and is featured in the previous issue of *Discover NLS*). 'Electors! Why do you send Members to Parliament?' begins one pamphlet. The reason, according to the leaflet, is so that they can carry out the wishes of the (male) electorate - and not to introduce a bill giving women the vote, against men's wishes.

Another pamphlet asks 'Are you

Helen Vincent with some of the pamphlets

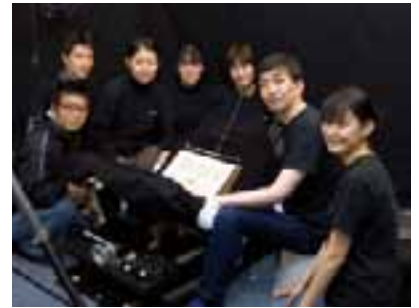


An anti-suffrage manifesto

prepared to have the British Empire run by 11,500,000 women and 10,000,000 men?' Women, it is argued, may be able to cope with domestic issues such as health and education, but only men are fit for the 'responsibilities of imperial government'. A pamphlet, by Grace Saxon Mills, states that 'all government rests ultimately on force, to which women, owing to physical, moral, and social reasons, are not capable of contributing'. Strikingly, on the brink of the First World War, 'Manifesto: No Votes for Women' proclaims that 'If war breaks out, men alone can fight it out.'

After the first Act of Parliament granting women the right to vote was passed in 1918, the debate came to an end, and the publications of the Anti-Suffrage League faded into obscurity. Today they remain a reminder of how perfectly intelligent and respectable men and women could hold an opinion that now seems very strange. I wonder what ideas from 2009 held in our collections will seem equally peculiar to scholars of the future?

For more information visit <http://suffragettes.nls.uk>



The team from the HUMI Project

ONLINE

Digital Archive still growing

The Library's Digital Archive continues to grow, with the online collection now boasting some remarkable images from the First World War and Ordnance Survey maps from the first half of the 20th century.

In addition, the archive contains scans of important literary works, such as a first edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped* published in 1886, and of treasures such as the Gutenberg Bible of 1453-55, the first book printed using moveable type.

The process involved in producing high-quality digital facsimiles of precious early printed books and manuscripts can be complex. The scanning of the Gutenberg Bible took place over the course of three weeks and involved a team of seven people from the HUMI Project, Keio University, Tokyo which generously financed this work. The team photographed every part of the National Library's copy of the Bible, and then around a year later delivered a set of over 1,400 images.

NLS' programme of digitisation lets anybody with access to a computer view countless other rare and important works.

Explore NLS' Digital Archive at <http://digital.nls.uk>



The Gutenberg Bible

PLAN of CASTLE TYRIM in MUYDART



EXHIBITION

Paul Sandby Picturing Britain

Picturing Britain, a major exhibition of the work of the artist and topographical draughtsman Paul Sandby (1731-1809), is touring the country and will be in Edinburgh from November to February. Commemorating the bicentenary of Sandby's death, this is the first exhibition devoted to this pioneering figure in the development of British landscape painting, watercolour and topographical drawing. It includes examples of his work from all the major collections.

In 1747, Sandby was appointed chief draughtsman to the Roy Military Survey of Scotland (the most detailed map of the Scottish mainland in the entire 18th century). He worked in Scotland for a further five years, drafting several striking and colourful military maps, plans and views. The exhibition features two original items from this period held by NLS, as well as other Scottish material, including part of the Roy map itself.

The Paul Sandby exhibition visits the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh from 7 November 2009 to 7 February 2010

Paul Sandby's plan of
Castle Tyrim in Muydart

THEATRE

A child's view as Darwin play comes to NLS

Set in what was called a 'Darwinscope time machine', This View of Life, a play written by NLS' Writer-in-Residence Peter Arnott, proved to be a great success during its recent run across several venues, including the Library. The production, a collaboration with the TAG Theatre Company, introduced around 1,300 primary school children to the life and works of Charles Darwin.



A scene from
Peter Arnott's
This View of
Life

TAG THEATRE

DIGITAL RESOURCE

New Stevenson website goes online



Robert Louis Stevenson

Launched in November, Edinburgh Napier University's Robert Louis Stevenson website is the most comprehensive online resource on the life and times of one of the 19th century's most famous writers.

The development of the website was made possible thanks to funding from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. It contains pages devoted to each of Stevenson's texts, including plot

synopses, and information about publication and reception. Also included are biographical pages on Stevenson, and information on his family, friends, and those authors that exerted an influence on his work.

Other parts of the website provide information about locations to visit and links to tourist information. Details of RLS museums and libraries with significant Stevenson collections (including NLS) are also available.

www.robert-louis-stevenson.org

The Wallace Monument



UPDATE

'Missing' document was never lost

Earlier in the year, *The Scotsman* ran a story that the original plans for the Wallace Monument had gone missing and might even have been stolen from the Library. After speaking with the Library's Director of Collections and Research, Cate Newton, *Discover NLS* can reveal the truth behind the headlines.

'We have a list of around 200 items that are missing from our collection of 16 million,' explains

Cate, 'but for the most part these are items that have been used by our readers and then filed away on the wrong shelves.'

'In respect of *The Scotsman* story, the actual item that the journalist noticed on our list wasn't the original Wallace Monument plans, but a four-page pamphlet produced at that time, that is of far less significance. Nonetheless, we did subsequently track that pamphlet down. Just as expected, it had been misfiled on the wrong shelf.'

PREMIERE

Celebrating Scottish films

To coincide with the UNESCO World Day for Audiovisual Heritage, on 27 October 2009 NLS launched a new initiative to digitise complete films from the National Moving Images collection at the Library. In the first stage of the programme, 100 full films will be available on the Scottish Screen Archive website, as well as 1,000 film clips.

The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage aims to raise awareness of the importance for national identities of moving images and recorded sounds. It also focuses on the need to protect vintage audiovisual material. Throughout the day, a sequence of short films were screened in a continuous loop at the National Library of Scotland's café at George IV Bridge, including a film depicting what is believed to be the earliest personal wedding caught on camera in the British Isles. *The Wedding of the 4th Marquess of Bute*, which dates from 1905, has recently been restored by the Scottish Screen Archive.

On the same day, a curators' choice of 'visual delights' was screened at the Glasgow Film Theatre, including the premiere of two recently discovered early films.

NLS also recently provided Scottish schools with 200 clips via a new educational website. Scotland on Screen was developed jointly with Learning and Teaching Scotland and Scottish Screen. The site allows students and teachers to view, download and re-use the clips, which date from 1895 to the 1980s.

Visit the website at <http://scotlandonscreen.org.uk>



A 1905 wedding caught on camera

Winter events at NLS

All events take place at the National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge, unless otherwise stated



Denise Mina

MURIEL SPARK SOCIETY ANNUAL LECTURE

13 January, 6pm

Novelist Denise Mina reflects on the life and work of Muriel Spark.

THE CHEVIOT, THE STAG AND THE BLACK, BLACK OIL

26 January, 6pm

Written by John McGrath and performed by the 7:84 Theatre Company, *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* tells the story of economic change in the Highlands, from the Clearances to the oil boom of the 1970s. Join original cast members Liz MacLennan, Bill Paterson

and others as they discuss this important theatrical work and its legacy.

STANZA 2010 – FESTIVAL PROGRAMME LAUNCH

28 January, 6pm

Join renowned poet Kei Miller to launch StAnza's 2010 poetry festival programme, which this year will feature Seamus Heaney, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Dennis O'Driscoll, Don Paterson and others.

THE BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

9 February, 6pm

With over 117 productions in over 114 locations the National Theatre of Scotland has achieved much in its first four years, from the multi-award winning *Black Watch* and *Peer*

John McGrath
The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil



Gynt to The Bacchae. A panel of guests will look at why Scotland needed NTS.

SCOTTISH CUSTOMS FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE

11 February, 6pm

NLS is delighted to welcome Margaret Bennett, author, folklorist, ethnologist and singer. Her work *Scottish Customs* spans several centuries of Scottish tradition.

JOHN MURRAY, LORD BYRON AND CAROLINE LAMB

15 February, 6pm

What was the relationship between the London publisher, the notorious poet and the tempestuous (married) Regency belle? Peter Arnott presents dramatised readings from the John Murray Archive.

THE BOOK THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

4 March, 6pm

To celebrate the launch of new collection *The Book That Changed My Life*, award-winning author AL Kennedy will be joined by Sara Sheridan

to discuss which books have changed their lives.

THE TRAVERSE THEATRE 1985 – A SEASON OF IMPORTANCE

8 March, 6pm

With productions including *Losing Venice*, *Elizabeth Gordon Quinn* and *White Rose* the 1985 season at Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre had a major impact on the theatrical landscape of Scotland. Join a panel of experts as they look back on this seminal year.

Book events online at www.nls.uk/events/booking or call 0131 623 3918



Margaret Bennett

EDINBURGH THE FOCUS FOR NEW DIGITAL MAPPING PROJECT

In September, work began on a project to create, with the aid of new digital technologies, easy tools for combining historical information with geo-referenced maps. Visualising Urban Geographies, a 15-month Knowledge Transfer Fellowship, is a collaborative venture with Edinburgh University and is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The project will use existing historical research data on Edinburgh, obtained from the census, property registers and directories, and

combine this with maps of the city held by the Library. The data and maps will be used together to create new social, cultural and political geographies of the city at various times and dates.

While the focus is on Edinburgh, the project will also demonstrate how new and existing research on other towns, cities and villages can be linked to freely-available, geo-referenced mapping and imagery.

For more: geo.nls.uk/urbhist



Edinburgh will be the subject of the new maps

First at the North Pole: Cook or Peary?

Foreign Collections Curator **John Bowles** presents publications and postcards from NLS' polar holdings

Perched at the very crest of the globe, the North Pole has always been an enticing prospect for adventurers. But in the early years of the 20th century, international controversy raged as two Americans and their support teams lodged competing claims to being the first to reach the top of the world.

The Americans in question were Frederick Cook, a medical doctor, and Robert Peary, a naval officer. Cook reported he had reached the Pole on 21 April 1908, but couldn't make this claim until he returned to civilisation again in September 1909. Five days later came the announcement from Peary that he had reached the Pole on 6 April 1909.

While Cook's claim has been discounted by most polar authorities, uncertainty has remained regarding Peary's precise achievement. He undoubtedly travelled a lot nearer to the Pole than Cook, but his calculations of the actual distance that he travelled are regarded by many as highly suspect. The Library's polar collections contain a number of items – both serious and humorous – which reflect the global interest aroused by this polar punch-up.

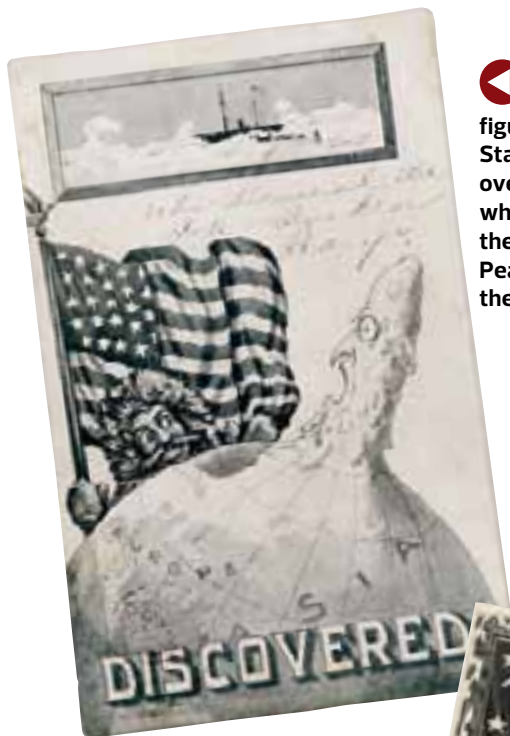
One pair of portrait postcards record simply that Cook 'reached the pole April 21, 1908', while Peary reached 'the goal of his life's ambition April 6, 1909'.



Contemporary newspaper accounts give a flavour of reactions to the dispute. 'Polar feud brews as Peary is awaited' was the front-page headline on *The St Louis Times* of 7 September 1909, alongside the picture caption 'Rival American discoverers of the North Pole and wives who for years have shared dislike.'

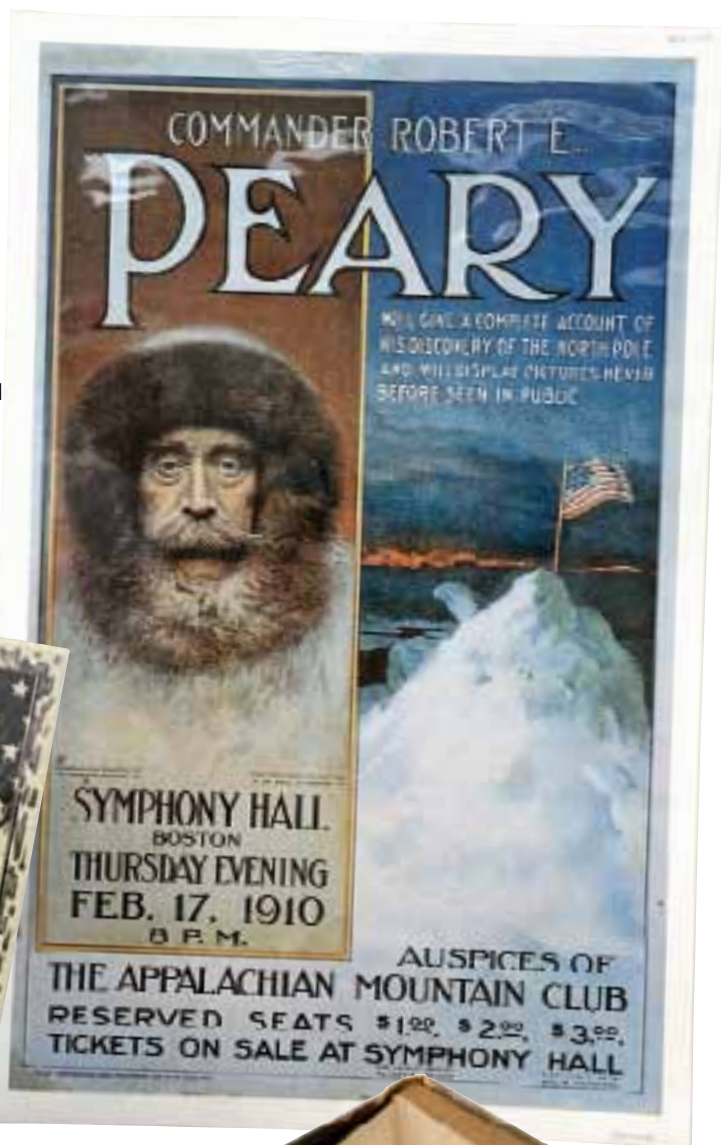
French satirical magazine *L'Assiette au Beurre*, dated 16 October 1909, shows two fur-clad explorers, both clutching American flags, grappling with each other atop the globe. From Sweden there's a cloth-backed folded board game of 1910, *Kampen om Nordpolen*, involving a race to the North Pole. Players could choose either the Cook or the Peary route in their race.





◀ In *Discovered!*, a cartoon postcard, the figure of Cook, carrying the Stars and Stripes, appears over the side of a globe, where he is confronted with the ice-encrusted head of Peary sticking through the site of the North Pole.

▶ Peary's own poster for his lecture tour claimed that it would 'give a complete account of his discovery of the North Pole and will display pictures never before seen in public'.



▶ *How Cook and Peary Discovered the North Pole* is a set of 50 cards illustrating episodes from the two explorers' accounts of their polar conquests. No. 49 reproduces a cartoon, 'Whose little Girlie are you?', showing the explorers fighting each other under the gaze of a polar nymph.



▶ Like many other explorers, both Cook and Peary struggled to obtain financial backing for their journeys and on their return had to recoup expenses by undertaking lecture tours. The collections include a four-page advertising leaflet for a lecture tour by Cook.



▶ Another illustrated postcard sees the Stars and Stripes nailed to the 'axis of the world', claiming victory for America, and showing both Cook and Peary.



▶ *The Cook-ed-up Peary-odd-ical Dictionary* by Paul Dash, published in Boston in 1910, cast a sardonic look at the whole North Pole circus. A typical entry is that for 'eskimo' – 'A fuzzy biped who does all the work and gets little glory... a privileged race that can swap wives without getting their names in the papers.'

THEATRE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Sally Harrower
and Andrew
Martin talk to
Mark Fisher about
a new exhibition
celebrating Scottish
theatre over the last
four decades

Henry Ford's promise of any colour 'so long as it is black' served the American motor industry well. Curiously, it has also done wonders for theatre in Scotland.

The story of the modern Scottish stage is sandwiched between two world-conquering plays, both with black in the title.

It begins in 1973 with John McGrath's *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* and it ends in 2007 with Gregory Burke's *Black Watch*. Throw in David Harrower's *Blackbird*, which has enjoyed scores of revivals around the world since its debut in the 2005 Edinburgh International Festival, and it starts to look like a conspiracy, especially if you consider the warm reception given to such Scottish plays as Des Dillon's *Six Black Candles* and Vox Motus's recent *Bright Black*.

The scale of the successes of McGrath and Burke is fortuitous for NLS. It means the Curtain Up winter exhibition, celebrating the Library's substantial archive of theatre-related material, can start and end with black-to-black triumphs that put Scottish culture on the international map. 'We decided we'd like to highlight the modern collection in the exhibition space,' says Manuscripts Curator Sally Harrower, who has put together the exhibition with Andrew Martin, Curator of Modern Scottish Collections. 'The main archives that we have here pinned us to the 1970s onwards.'

There is another reason for starting with *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*. NLS is privileged to hold the official archive of 7:84 Scotland, the theatre company set up by John McGrath with a left-wing political agenda informed by the statistic that 7% of the population owned 84% of the wealth. Earlier this year, Sally received the final delivery of material from the company, which ceased trading at the end of 2008. 'That was a really sad day for me,' she says. 'All these odds and ends came in, like a bag of badges – because they were a very badgey company – and a marching banner.'



A lot of people have loved using language and I think that is a Scottish trait

Badges and banners are not all they had. Shortly after being given the last of the archive, NLS bought one of 7:84 Scotland's earliest artefacts: the original set for *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*. This is a giant pop-up book painted by John Byrne which the pioneering company toured around the church halls and community centres of rural Scotland in 1973. From the front it looks in pretty good condition, but a peek behind reveals the gaffer tape and scuffs that tell their own tale of the set's frontline duty. Ground-breaking on a number of levels, the play inspired several generations of theatre-makers to forge a career on the stage.

McGrath's genius was to tell a history of economic exploitation – from the Highland Clearances to the discovery of North Sea oil – without becoming dull and didactic. The message might have been weighty, but the medium was the opposite: a raucous ceilidh full of music, songs and jokes that had more in common with variety entertainment than classical drama. It was political theatre, in other words, that was not only about the people but of the people, and it established a tradition in Scotland of performances that acknowledged a more equitable relationship between actor and audience.

'We're using *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* as a starting point, with a nod towards the influences that might have informed it, such as the variety tradition, Gaelic song and *The Great Northern Welly Boot Show*,' says Sally, referring to a lively celebration of the Upper Clyde shipbuilders' work-in starring Billy Connolly in 1972. 'Then there's a big chunk of material about the play itself, including the stage set.'

With such an exuberant starting point, NLS' curators realised that an exhibition focusing only on the printed word would be inadequate. The collection has a rich treasure trove of written material (Sally has catalogued 3,000 scripts, many of them unproduced and unpublished, and reckons there might be more), but the characteristic quality shared by *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* and John Tiffany's production of *Black Watch* for the National Theatre of Scotland is their theatricality. Whether it is the energy of the actors or the spectacle of the staging, theatre is always about more than words. 'We made a move away from writers to events and experiences,' says Andrew. 'Focusing on the writers was a wee bit artificial

**Liz Lochhead's
Mary Queen of
Scots Got Her
Head Chopped Off**



Right *Bondagers* by Sue Glover
Below Theatrical poster for *Black Watch*

so we broadened it to include things like the Edinburgh Festival and the Citizens Theatre.'

Luckily, the Library's collection does not stop at books, even though some items, such as Byrne's set, can cause storage headaches. NLS certainly has plenty of published texts and unpublished scripts – the archive of Edinburgh's Traverse Theatre alone contributes many of these. Theatre archives include ephemera such as programmes, posters and photographs and, with some borrowing from theatre companies and the Scottish Theatre Archive at Glasgow University, the curators have tried to convey a sense of the three-dimensional presence of the stage. Items on loan from the National Theatre of Scotland, for example, include the dress worn by Siobhan Redmond when she played Elizabeth in Schiller's *Mary Stuart* in 2006. 'We've got some lovely things including Alan Cumming's kilt from *The Bacchae* and the original bonnets from Sue Glover's *Bondagers*,' says Andrew, who also has the loan of props, costumes and set models from the Citizens and the Traverse.

They have divided the exhibition into six scenes, making the journey thematic rather than chronological. After the 7:84 material of the first scene, we are introduced to the Traverse, the Citizens and some smaller theatre companies, such as Gerry Mulgrew's Communicado, to outline what Sally calls the 'diversity of means of production leading to a thriving theatre scene'.

In scene three, we turn to the plays and consider the versions of Scotland and Scottish history that have been put on the stage. The history play was in vogue in the 1970s and 1980s, a reflection perhaps of a nation exploring its past to help define its identity for today. In plays such as *The Jesuit* by Donald Campbell (about John Ogilvie, who died upholding his Catholic faith in 1615), writers used the past to inform the present. Since Liz Lochhead's 1987 masterpiece *Mary Queen of Scots Got her Head Chopped Off*, recently revived by the National Theatre of Scotland, the historical drama has been less common and by the time we got to *Black Watch* it was enough to condense the history of the regiment into a brief, if memorable, vignette of military costume changes.



What has not gone out of fashion is an interest in language. Fewer playwrights are writing in Scots today, but many make vigorous use of dialect, from the working-class Fife of Gregory Burke to the Glasgow patter of Tony Roper's *The Steemie*, and no one does magpie-like linguistic eclecticism as well as Liz Lochhead. 'A lot of people have loved using language and I think that is a Scottish trait,' says Andrew. 'You get it in the poetic side of things and also in that witty repartee and rhetoric that runs through everything.'

Other visions of Scotland covered by this part of the exhibition include Sue Glover's *Bondagers*, about the bonded female labour of the 19th-century Borders, and 7:84's Clydebuilt season in 1982, a revival of neglected early-20th century working-class plays depicting what Andrew calls 'hard man/strong woman city life'. 'It's a snapshot of a variety of plays that are set in Scotland,' he says. 'It's different Scotlands – rural, city, past and present.'

Next we explore the international impact of Scottish theatre. Several years before *Blackbird* was a hit on Broadway, David Harrower wrote the mysterious, elemental *Knives in Hens*, which has had a similarly extended life in translations such as the Danish *Knive i Høns* and German *Messer in Hennen*. In the exhibition, they've got a copy of the Norwegian *Knivar i Høner*. Also represented is the prolific David Greig, who has explored the idea of internationalism in

“
**I think
 people will
 be surprised
 that we've
 got a lot of
 this material**”

many of his plays and has enjoyed success further afield. And it's in this section that we come across the Edinburgh International Festival, the opportunity for Scotland to showcase itself on a global stage and the chance for Scottish audiences to see major names of world theatre from Ninagawa to Peter Stein.

The fifth scene traces the history of the campaign for a national theatre in Scotland, looking at attempts at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum in the 1970s, the Scottish Theatre Company in the 1980s and the National Theatre for Scotland Campaign in the 1990s, bringing us up to date with the launch of the National Theatre of Scotland in 2006. 'We end with *Black Watch* as an example of a big success and a play by a Scottish writer,' says Andrew.

The final scene is the interactive area, combining plays with playfulness and providing the opportunity to look in greater



Alan Cumming in *The Bacchae*

depth at some of the themes. During the long run of the exhibition there will be a number of associated events, including a reunion of several of the company members from *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*, among them Bill Paterson, John Bett and Elizabeth MacLennan; a discussion involving the generation of playwrights who emerged from the Traverse in 1985, including Jo (formerly John) Clifford, Peter Arnott and Chris Hannan; and the launch of a book of plays by Alasdair Gray.

'It was a good opportunity to exploit the archives,' says Andrew. 'I think people will be surprised that we've got a lot of this material. It will look very eye-catching and dramatic.'

Curtain Up : 40 Years of Scottish Theatre runs from 19 December 2009 to 3 May 2010 at the National Library of Scotland, George IV Bridge

THE NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

FROM PIPEDREAM TO BLACK WATCH

'Why not be national?' was the rallying cry of *The Scotsman's* theatre critic, filled with patriotic pride after the first-night staging of Sir Walter Scott's *Rob Roy*. 'Why should we not be proud of our national genius, humour, music, kindness and fidelity?' The unnamed critic was surely not the only one to be so stirred, yet this was 1819 and it would be the best part of two centuries before Scotland would get its own national theatre.

Rob Roy had appeared at Edinburgh's Theatre Royal, on the east end of Princes Street, described a century later by Donald Mackenzie as 'Scotland's

First National Theatre' in a book of the same name. In the 1920s, the Scottish National Players had visions of a 'Scottish National Theatre along the lines of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin', an idea not so far removed from that of Clive Perry at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum in the late-1960s and Ewan Hooper, who set up the touring Scottish Theatre Company in 1981.

There are many reasons for the long wait, but it is no coincidence that the National Theatre of Scotland happened when it did.

The establishment of a Scottish Parliament in 1999 meant that, for the first time, there was a generation of politicians both willing and able to back a national scheme.

Thus in 2006, the National Theatre of Scotland launched with an event called *Home* that set the agenda for the kind of organisation this could be. It consisted of ten productions in every corner of the country, ranging from a puppet show in a disused shop in Stornoway to a drama in a drill hall in Dumfries. Here was a national theatre prepared to make you question the very idea of

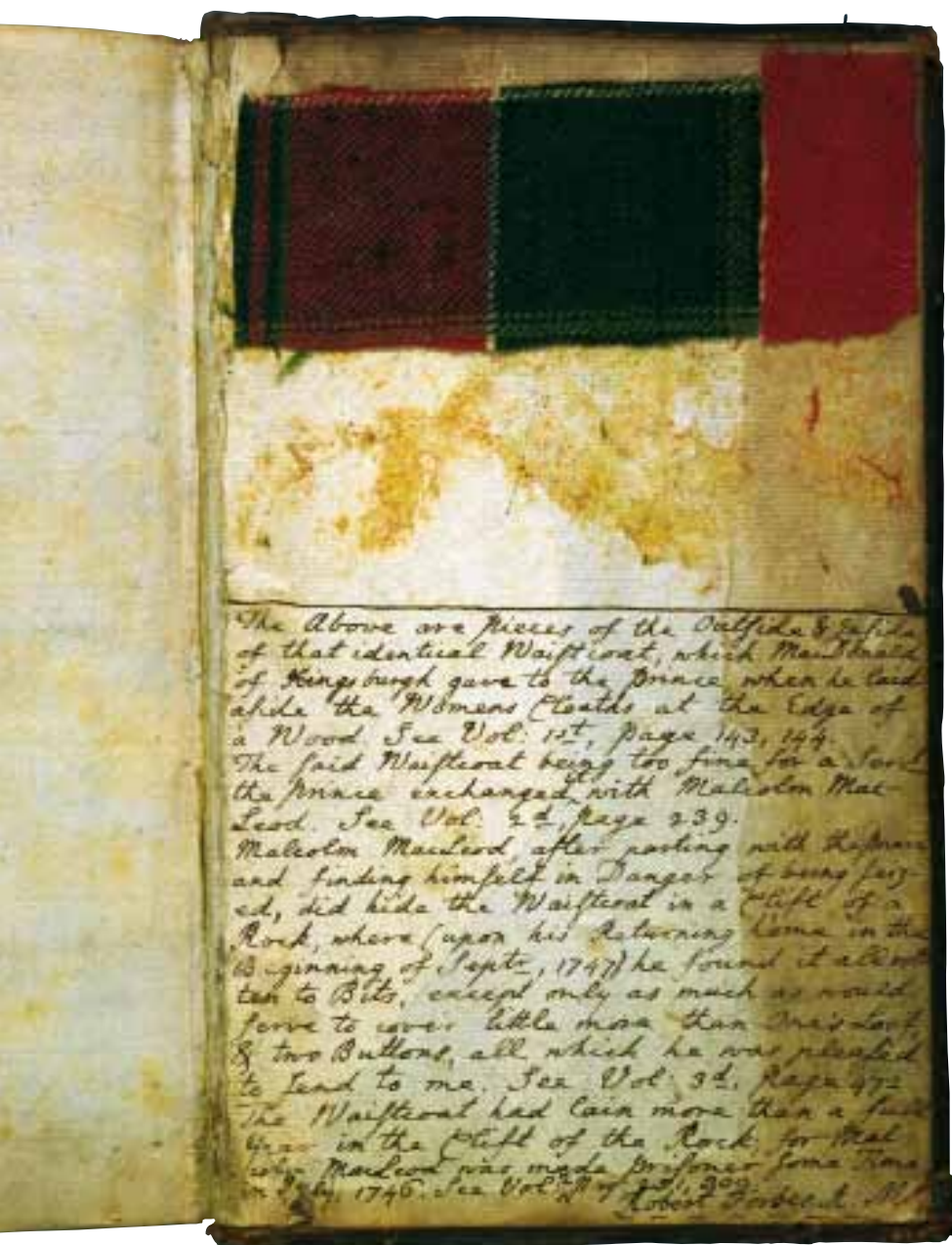
nationhood and even theatre itself.

It was the new organisation's tremendous good fortune that in its very first year it produced *Black Watch*. Gregory Burke's play, as directed by John Tiffany, was based on interviews with soldiers who had fought in Iraq at the exact moment that the Black Watch regiment was being amalgamated into the Royal Regiment of Scotland. The play managed to combine an urgent topicality with thrilling theatricality, not to mention the playwright's tremendous empathy for the ordinary squaddie. The result was Scottish theatre's biggest

hit since *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* and a tour of duty that took in New York, New Zealand and London.

Playbill from the Theatre Royal





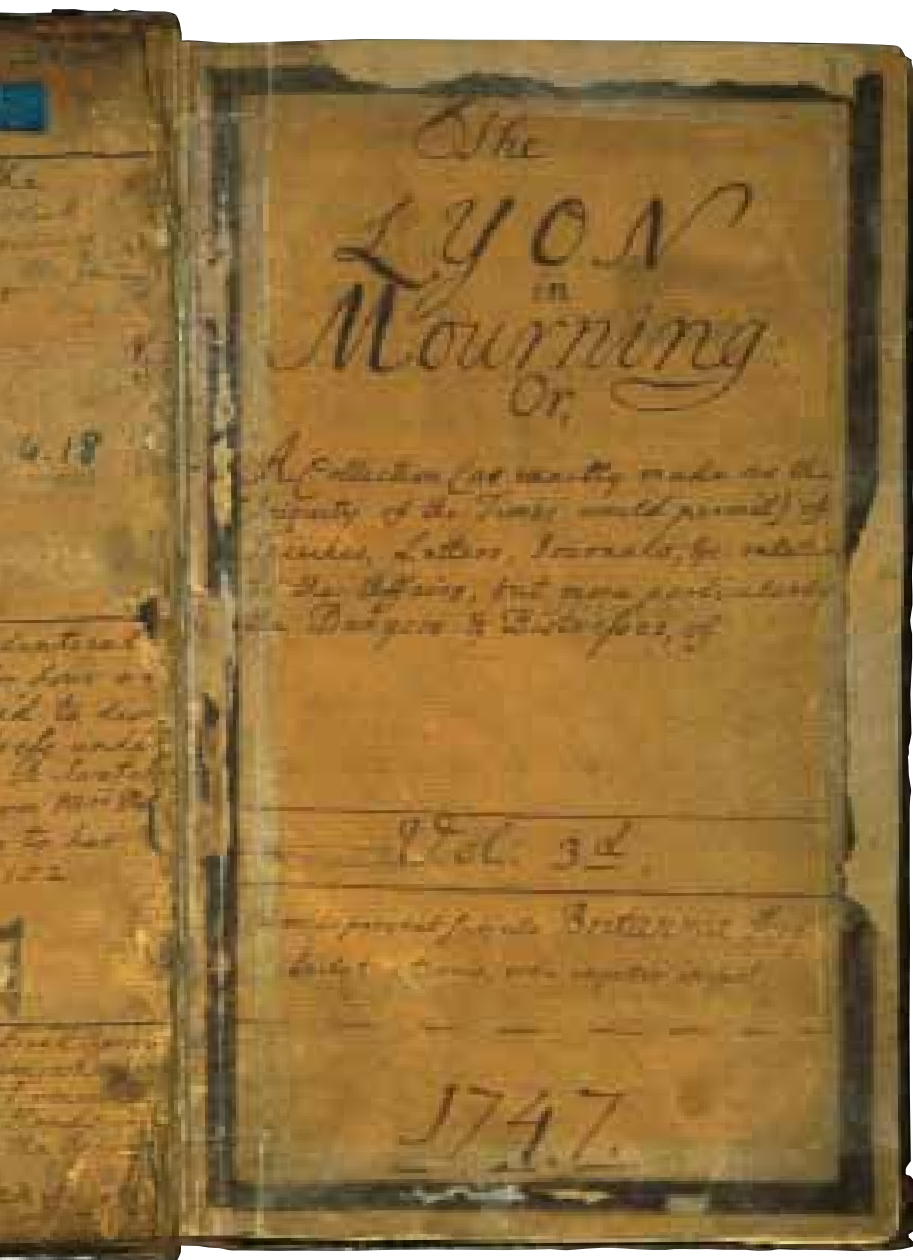
Robert Forbes risked everything to capture eyewitness accounts of the Jacobite flight from Culloden. The result, part of the latest Treasures display, was *The Lyon in Mourning*. Clare Harris takes a closer look

End of a rebellion

In today's age of instant technology, we can see conflict unfolding as it happens on our screens. Back in the 18th century, however, things were slower – news of defeat or victory took hours, days even, to make its way from the battleground to the public consciousness. That's what makes Robert Forbes' *The Lyon in Mourning* so significant in both ambition and scope.

This historical work, on show as part of NLS' Treasures display, is a collection of interviews, letters, first-hand accounts and even scraps of fabric that combine to chart the Jacobite rising and the eventual defeat and exile of its figurehead, Charles Edward Stuart. Forbes worked quickly, capturing testimonies while they remained fresh and putting them together in 'utmost secrecy'.

Born in Rayne, Aberdeenshire, the only son of a schoolmaster and a servant, Robert Forbes was



baptised into the Episcopalian church in 1708. He would go on to become a minister and, in 1762, Bishop of Ross and Caithness. His was the church of the Jacobites, and as such he aligned himself with their cause – the restoration of the Stuart line to the throne. Indeed, after being prevented from taking his seat as the Bishop of Aberdeen in 1765, he assisted in secret but never realised plans for a Protestant marriage for Charles Edward, with the aim of producing an acceptable Stuart heir. Forbes had joined the Jacobite rising in 1745, only to be arrested and held in Stirling and Edinburgh Castles until May 1746, just one month after Charles Stuart's followers were defeated at the battle of Culloden. It was at that point that he began work on *The Lyon in Mourning*, the Lyon of the title signifying Scotland.

While Forbes had penned other articles, translations and journals, this history would be his defining work. In it, he delved deep into



What Forbes put to paper was as real as today's live-feed reportage

NLS Treasures

NLS holds some of the most rare and important books, manuscripts and collections in the world. Some are so precious that they can only be displayed for short periods of time, to stop them from succumbing to decay. The Library began displaying these Treasures in September 2009, allowing visitors to see such gems as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's

manuscript of *The Case of the Illustrious Client*, bought in the summer of 2007. The Robert Burns manuscript *The Battle of Sherramuir*, purchased at auction in the USA in January 2009 has also been on display. *The Lyon in Mourning* will be on show at National Library of Scotland from 20 November to 4 January, 2010. The exhibition is free.

**Far Left Cloth stuck to the inside cover
Left The title page of *The Lyon in Mourning***

every aspect of the rising, from the moment Charles Stuart landed on Scottish shores to the enduring military and political

consequences. What he put to paper was as real as today's live-feed reportage. A perfectly preserved fragment of a woman's gown is tacked to the inside cover of one volume, with a note reading 'a piece of that identical gown that the Prince wore for four or five days, when he was obliged to disguise himself in a female dress under the name of Bettie Burk.'

This wonderful glimpse brings colour to the first-hand accounts inside, such as that obtained from Jacobite cavalryman Edward Burk, or Ned for short, who describes the moment he stumbled across Prince Charlie himself, 'having no right guide and very few along with him', attempting to make his way from the battlefield of Culloden to safety. There follows a now well-told story of flight through Highland glens and Hebridean sounds to the boat of one Flora MacDonald, over the sea to Skye. It was from Ned Burk, recounts Forbes, that Charles plucked the name of his female alter ego.

Working under the tightest security, Forbes produced eight manuscript volumes, each numbering more than 200 pages, within the five years following Culloden. In 1761 he started the ninth volume, followed by a tenth in 1775. This last remains unfinished, as on 18 November of the same year Forbes died in Leith. Thirteen years later came the death of Charles Stuart.

The Lyon in Mourning remains one of the most vivid accounts of Scottish history, precisely because it told the tale of everyone involved. Extracts were published in 1834 by Robert Chambers as *The Jacobite Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745*, and in 1895 the full text was edited by Henry Paton and published by the Scottish History Society. It became one of the keystones of the Scottish canon, as the country moved from religious turbulence to the Enlightenment.



IN SEARCH OF SPACE

How do you fit an ever-growing collection of books, manuscripts and other objects into a finite space? NLS trustee **Willis Pickard** investigates

Thanks to acquisitions and legal deposit, there is a relentless cascade of books, journals and maps arriving at NLS. Such is the rate, the Library requires an extra 3,000 metres of shelf space each year in its two Edinburgh buildings at George IV Bridge and Causewayside to accommodate the intake.

Space is running out as the 16 million items in the collections continue to grow. The ideal solution would be to find another building, but that is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future. So the priority is to use existing space more efficiently.

Fortunately Steve Scott, the Library's Collection Support Services Manager, has been aware of the problem for some years and with his colleagues has devised ways to store material more tightly without making it less accessible.

The problem first struck home when the fast-growing category of paperback books was about to overwhelm the area dedicated to it. The solution 'is not rocket science,' Steve says. 'It's just common sense – how can we best use the space?'

He points to a humble cardboard box, the kind in which books and journals are stored. In the past, material was put into boxes and placed on shelves regardless of how much spare space was left in the boxes and around the shelves. For the past five years that approach has been replaced by coordinated efforts to design better-shaped boxes and to put them on the shelves in such a way that there are no gaps around them, or between one row of boxes and the row behind it.

A project team led by one of Steve's managers, Jim Young, has worked with the Estates Department of the Library to identify areas where savings can be made. One problem was that the shelving at Causewayside differs from that at George IV Bridge. For an individual item, space saving may seem slight, hardly worth bothering about. But the scale of the Library's holdings is such that, multiplied, the space that can be clawed back goes a good way to reducing the strain on the shelves from the many thousands of items being added each year. Redesigning the shelves that store children's books in their weird and wonderful shapes has produced savings of up to 50%.

Lessons can be drawn from *The Sun*, too. The newspaper arrives every day, in its London and Scottish editions. One of the Library team noted that over the years its size had been reduced and it no longer took up all of its box. So the conservators have redesigned its housing, and a box-making machine turns out a bespoke product specially designed to preserve *The Sun* for the nation.



Redesigning the shelves that store children's books in their weird and wonderful shapes has produced savings of up to 50%

Since 2004, the space rationalisation project has saved over 6000 metres, which is the equivalent of almost £2 million if new built space had been provided. Steve Scott says that previous ways of storing books and journals were no longer feasible: 'A line had to be drawn in the sand.'

One result is that books are not now shelved by subject classification. That may sound like library anathema, but Steve points out that no one browses NLS' stacks. Everyone, staff as well as readers, uses the online catalogues to pursue a line of enquiry. So, armed with the shelf number, the book fetchers can just as easily retrieve required material as if, say, all books about the Jacobites were standing shoulder to shoulder courtesy of a traditional classification scheme.

The rationalisation project is in one sense utilitarian but Steve and his team never forget that it is only part of a wider purpose: 'We are working in a warehouse but our aim is to preserve the collections and make them as accessible as possible.'



Steve Scott manages the Library's storage

How the numbers stack up

■ It has been estimated that NLS requires around 17,000 metres of space to house the collections over the next five years. ■ If all this shelving were lined up end-to-end, it would stretch

from the Library building at George IV Bridge out across the Firth of Forth and to the outskirts of Kirkcaldy. ■ To date, the space rationalisation project has saved 6,011 metres of shelving.

This represents a real estate saving of £1.9 million. ■ In 2008 alone, NLS' collection grew by 3,167 metres of shelving space. That's enough space to hold 56,980 copies of *War and Peace*.



Chris Tabraham,
left, with NLS'
Chris Fleet

Touring Scotland by laptop

Chris Tabraham, Historic Scotland's Principal Historian, on his personal interest in the Library's map collection

I love maps. I have done ever since I was 'knee-high to a grasshopper'. At school, I was torn between reading geography or history at university. The latter won. But to my joy, I subsequently discovered just how important maps were in my job as a historian.

And that's where the NLS map collection comes in. With over two million sheet maps, 15,000 atlases, 100,000 maps on microfilm, over a terabyte of digital mapping, not to mention umpteen gazetteers, cartographic reference books, periodicals and map ephemera, you want for nothing. If it was in the retail business, they'd call it something like World of Maps. With so vast a collection, little wonder it had to move out of George IV Bridge in the early 1970s, initially to an old biscuit factory on Causewayside, and then from 1988 to a new headquarters on the same site, specially designed by Sir Basil Spence's architectural practice.

There's something for everyone in the map collection. There are maps of the whole country dating from 1560, county maps and town plans from 1580, Ordnance Survey maps, estate maps from the 1770s, coastal maps and Admiralty charts, bathymetrical maps (in case you want to

know the depth of your nearest loch) and much more. But for me it's the wonderful collection of military maps from the 18th century that has drawn me to its portal time and again.

In my nearly 40 years with Historic Scotland and its predecessor bodies, I've had a close involvement with some of our nation's great military sites, from mighty Edinburgh Castle and Fort George to the military roads threading their way through the Highlands. Quite honestly, I don't know where our present state of knowledge would be without the help of either the 400 plus 18th-century Board of Ordnance maps and plans preserved in Causewayside, or of the ever-helpful staff who curate them.

Until a few years ago, I had no option but to journey to Causewayside to consult the maps themselves. But the Library's marvellous map website means that today I can peruse them all, and another 20,000 high-resolution images, from the comfort of my own laptop. It's great to be able to tour late 16th-century Scotland courtesy of Timothy Pont, or mid 18th-century Scotland with William Roy, without having to move a muscle. At the click of a button, I can zoom in or out, pan up, down, left and right.

There's only one drawback. I don't get to see the helpful and personable staff that curate this wonderful collection as often as I used to.



If it was in the retail business, they'd call it something like World of Maps

Safe for the future

It's a massive task to ensure NLS' literary treasures are maintained and preserved for present and future generations. **Rab Jackson**, Preservation and Conservation Manager, tells us how his team can even overcome floods

What is the role of the Preservation and Conservation division at the Library?

Our job is to preserve the items in the collection so that not only can you or I see them, but our children will also be able to enjoy them. I am very keen for material to be available for today's users as well as tomorrow's, and although people think of preservation as being in conflict with access, I don't believe that's the case. Our work ensures that items in the collection can be enjoyed today, without damaging them for future generations.

With 16 million items in the Library is it tough to keep on top of the job?

It certainly throws up challenges. With 19 members of staff in the Preservation and Conservation division, we have to allocate the resources as carefully as possible. We believe one aspect of our work that's particularly important is education for staff and readers, so people know how they can help keep the collections safe for the future. We show staff in all parts of the Library how to handle books and paper.

Education is very important. You will see signs at the Library saying 'no food and drink', and you might think what harm would it do? But the crumbs on your fingers can easily spill onto the pages of a book, and this in turn encourages pests such as rats and mice, who once they've finished eating the crumbs will make a start on the paper.



Rab Jackson

Our work ensures that items in the collection can be enjoyed today, without damaging them for future generations

In February 2009 there was a flood at NLS. What happened?

A four-inch pipe broke and around 32,000 litres of water escaped. It happened on level 12, and the water spread into the structure of the building. We needed to ensure we didn't get a massive mould infestation, but we also wanted to dry the building out. However, drying it too quickly would have run the risk of damaging the books.

How did you respond?

When books and manuscripts get damaged in this way you have a 48-hour window in which to operate (wet material left unattended for more than 48 hours will start suffering from mould infestation). You have to get air moving through the collection and we did that. Volunteers were called in and we worked steadily through that crucial period. I have to say that the assistance from numerous members of staff on the night was absolutely exceptional, and it's a testament to all of those people, plus our friends in other organisations in Scotland, that the extent of the damage was ultimately very minimal.

The Library's digital preservation work will be explored in a future issue of *Discover NLS*



Taking care of your books

You don't need a team of 19 to keep your own collection safe. Here are Rab's top tips

1 Make sure your books are not in direct sunlight.
2 Clean hands are important. Grease and dirt can be transferred onto pages by hands.

3 When you open the book, try not to open it flat, and avoid breaking the back of the spine.
4 You should never store volumes on their fore-edge –

that's the part of the book opposite from, and parallel to, the spine.
5 Boxing valuable collections using archival boxes (acid free) is advised, as

they can take the brunt of the damage, protecting the items held inside.

For more on looking after your library www.bl.uk/npo

Playwright and artist **John Byrne** is just one of the several thousands of people represented in the Library's collections



John Byrne's
psychedelic
self-portrait

Born in 1940 in Paisley, John Byrne trained as a painter, attending Glasgow School of Art between 1958 and 1963. He had been schooled in colour from the age of 17 during his work as a 'slab boy', mixing shades for the local carpet factory. After art school he went on to work as a graphic designer while gaining repute for his art, showing in 1967 at London's Portal Gallery.

As the 1970s kicked off, Byrne's breadth of talent began to show. He hand-painted theatre sets for John McGrath's groundbreaking company 7:84, and moved further towards the stage when he wrote his first play, *Writer's Cramp*, in 1977. This was followed by the famous *Slab Boys* (1978). Bringing the carpet factory floor to life, the play and its companions in the *Slab Boys Trilogy* became modern classics. It was during the 1970s that Byrne also painted this self portrait [left], fresh from a mind-expanding trip to California. He wrote and drew characters for *Tutti Frutti* (1987), the boisterous TV series starring Emma Thompson and Robbie Coltrane, and he continues to create, recently opening an exhibition of new work at Glasgow Print Studio.

A range of Byrne's work can be found at the Library. Highlights include a 1975 STV documentary in which the artist discusses his 7:84 set designs, as well as showing off what may be his largest work – a colourful mural painted on the gable end of a Glasgow tenement.

For more on Scottish theatre, page 18

Discover more

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