A magazine of Magazines

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The new issue of **Discover NLS** inspires me to present some of the periodicals which are displayed in our exhibition. Produced to be read immediately and then discarded, magazines and newspapers can easily be lost to posterity, but their influence can often be stronger than that of books designed to be more permanent.

First, we have on display the July-September 1915 issues of ***Blackwood's Magazine***, which contain the first publication of John Buchan's ***The Thirty-Nine Steps***, published under the name 'H. de V.'. *Blackwood's*, which ran from 1817 to 1980 (when the firm merged with the Edinburgh printers Pillans & Wilson), had an important role in promoting authors: for example, it serialised George Eliot's first fictional work Scenes of Clerical Life (1857). I blogged about *Blackwood's* and some other great Edinburgh periodicals **earlier**.

Another popular Scottish periodical was ***Chambers's Journal***, which always had a slightly more scientific bent than the more literary *Blackwoods'*. On display in our Science case is *Chambers's Journal*, 7th series, vol. XIII, Nov. 1923. In the spring of that year, the Scot **John Logie Baird** started work on producing a viable television system. The brief account on display - sandwiched in between articles on door latches and a machine for slicing beans - is the first published account of his newly-patented prototype television apparatus. By 1926 Baird's experiments were sufficiently advanced for him to advertise his 'televisor' in a promotional leaflet as a 'splendid reality' and an 'epochmaking achievement': his pamphlet *The Baird "Televisor": Seeing by Wireless* is also on display.

A very different publication from the early twentieth century was **The Girls' Guildry Gazette**, of which the first issue, from 1909, is on display. The **Girls' Guildry** was founded in Scotland in 1900 as an organisation for girls, intended 'to help girls to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. To promote in girls discipline, selfrespect and reverence'. This official magazine contains news and other contributions from girls in branches around Britain, along with photographs, improving articles, and advice about needlework, physical exercise and other Guildry activities. In 1960 the Guildry merged with the Girls' Brigade, which is still active today.

Young women may have graduated from reading the *Gazette* to ***The Scottish Women's Temperance News***, published by the **British Women's Temperance Association** and the **Scottish Christian Union** between 1899 and 1984. This monthly journal was a mouthpiece for women by women concerned about the excesses of drink they witnessed around them. However, on display is an issue from 1941, featuring a contribution by a captain in the Scottish army who is flying the flag of total abstinence from alcohol at an RAF station in England in the middle of World War II. You can find out more about the BWTA/SCU by searching **Scran**.

Another temperance periodical was the **Edinburgh Monthly Democrat, and Total Abstinence Advocate** , a **Chartist** newspaper. The Chartist political movement was named after the People's Charter of May 1838 which was demanding, amongst other things, that all males over the age of 21 should get the vote and that voting should be done by secret ballot. The Edinburgh Monthly Democrat was the first Chartist newspaper in Scotland. Issue 3 of this newspaper from September 1838 printed the Charter in full and gave illustrations of a 'balloting place' and ballot boxes for a readership unfamiliar with the concepts.

Finally, no display of Scottish print would be complete without featuring something from the press of **D C Thomson**, who have been producing comics and annuals for children for over 80 years. Now with offices in Dundee, Glasgow, Manchester and London the firm produces over 200 million comics, magazines and newspapers. Some of their most enduring and popular titles include Dandy, Beano, Oor Wullie and Hotspur. For our exhibition, we chose ***The Beezer Book*** from 1957, the first annual of the Beezer comic which was published from 1956 to 1993, when it merged with the Beano.