

National Library of Scotland

# Annual Review

## 2007-2008

Bright ideas

# Breaking new ground



The world's biggest published book, *Bhutan: a visual odyssey across the last Himalayan kingdom* at 5x7 feet when open. The book went on display at NLS in March for World Book Day.

OUR recently published new strategy, *Expanding our Horizons*, picks up where its predecessor, *Breaking through the Walls*, left off. In the refreshed strategy, we give an update on the progress we have made in the past four years and we set out our plan to improve what we offer and how we will further develop services over the next three years. One major strategic addition to our list of corporate values is to encourage and pursue innovation across all areas of the Library's work. We have made a commitment to pursue bright ideas that will move us forward.

Reflecting this commitment, within these pages you will discover evidence of ground-breaking projects that offer enhanced digital services, exhibitions that set new standards for how archive material is interpreted, restoration that combines expert skills and the latest technology to bring our filmed heritage to life for today and tomorrow. You will also read about education projects that draw on historic paper collections to pass on invaluable knowledge and experiences to young learners, and the unique provision of global business information that no other UK library has made freely available to customers.

As we travel along the road ahead, our horizons will continue to expand and move with us, just as technology, expectations, behaviour, education and society continue to develop in new and interesting ways. We hope that this publication shows just how far we have come and showcases the excellent work carried out by all our staff in the name of innovation, in collaboration with a wide range of other organisations. We expect to deliver much more of this in the coming year. To everyone who has travelled with us this year, we thank you for your support and enthusiasm and we hope you'll keep pace with us in the year to come!

**Professor Michael Anderson**  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

**Martyn Wade**  
National Librarian and Chief Executive



# Redefining library exhibitions

OPENING THE DOOR INTO A WORLD OF INVENTION WITH THE JOHN MURRAY ARCHIVE EXHIBITION

SEVERAL years of hard work and creative thinking behind the project to acquire and share one of the world's most important publisher's archives, the John Murray Archive (JMA), reached an exciting culmination in June 2007, when the permanent exhibition of the Archive opened its doors to the public.

The JMA is a veritable goldmine of information on many of the world's greatest thinkers, writers, explorers, politicians, scientists and educators, including Lord Byron, Jane Austen, Charles Darwin, David Livingstone, Benjamin Disraeli and countless others from the past three centuries. Taking this material as its starting point, the exhibition broke radical new ground in highlighting the rich contribution these eminent individuals made to the making of the modern world. Original manuscript material, highly inventive multimedia and animation techniques, award-winning state-of-the-art theatrical lighting, and an anarchic sense of fun combined to create a unique experience that immerses visitors into the world and minds of history's heavyweights.

The exhibition also provided the catalyst for the first phase of our project to transform our flagship building in Edinburgh's George IV Bridge into a Visitor Centre fit for the 21st century. New audiovisual, exhibition and events facilities were opened up in June 2007, including an orientation space that is being prepared to accommodate an overview of our collections and the treasures they hold, while also showcasing a changing programme of collection displays on a wide range of themes, materials and subjects.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



April

Sir Sean Connery launches the John Murray Archive public fundraising campaign.

May

1707 Act of Union debated at NLS with historians Michael Fry, Christopher Whateley, Paul Henderson Scott and Brian Taylor.

June

The Roy Military Map of Scotland goes online.



JMA Conservator Kate Kidd pictured with the award-winning John Murray Archive exhibition. The exhibition uses cutting-edge technology to bring 19th-century stories to life. The sophisticated lighting used responds to visitors in the exhibition, while also protecting the items from light damage.

# Moving beyond words

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE CATRIONA TAYLOR MAPS OUT A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

THE National Library's collections offer a wealth of opportunities for those researching the lives, work and literature of Scots, whether in Scotland or scattered across the world. Visual artist and theatre practitioner Catriona Taylor was spoilt for choice therefore when she started a two-month residency in May 2007 to create a visual art project drawing on elements of the collections. Having been exposed to a wide variety of material and enthused by curatorial staff in maps, manuscripts, foreign and modern collections, she settled on a theme of a sense of place. Catriona set about exploring how she could interpret the material, imbued with a poignant sense of how various places in time had affected the lives of Scots, in Scotland and overseas.

Her personal journey among our archives took her to 18th century Edinburgh, the Highlands after the clearances and with Scots who emigrated to America and Australia down the centuries. The result was *Words out of Place*, an evocative exhibition that drew inspiration from the manuscript of Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*, Sorley MacLean's *Hallaig* poem and maps of 19th-century Edinburgh. Catriona produced original artworks in response to this material, such as a boat covered with copies of the letters of over a hundred Scots emigrants, slates inscribed with words from *Hallaig*, copied from the poet's handwriting, and a recreation of a ruin from a cleared Highland village. The exhibition also invited public interaction, with the installation of a memory map, on which many visitors pinned their own memories of Edinburgh.

**WHAT THEY SAID:** 'This groundbreaking exhibition is excellent. It is exactly the sort of thing that the National Library should be doing.'

**Richard Demarco**  
Artist and Curator

**WHAT YOU SAID:** 'It's a poignant and sotto voce exhibition, with more than a touch of Ian Hamilton Finlay about it.'

**Stuart Kelly**  
Literary Editor, Scotland on Sunday

**WHAT'S NEXT ON THE HORIZON:** Catriona is currently working as Literature Development Officer for Dumfries & Galloway Council. She has exhibitions commissioned for Homecoming Scotland celebrations in the Borders during 2009 and at Cairns Gallery in Peebles this October. The residency has been nominated in two categories at the Arts&Business Scotland Awards, with plans to extend the project in the future.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



July

HRH Prince Philip pays the Library a visit and formally opens the **Tea and Tigers: Stories of Scotland and South Asia** exhibition. Pictured alongside him is Jan Usher, the lead curator of the exhibition and Head of Official Publications at NLS.

August

Andrew Marr surveyed the Scottish political landscape in the 2007 NLS Donald Dewar Memorial Lecture at the Edinburgh International Book Festival.



Artist Catriona Taylor drew inspiration from the manuscript of Sir Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*. The ruin of St Anthony's Chapel, and its surroundings of King's Park, St Leonard's Crags and Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, play an evocative role in the novel.

# Restoring Scotland on Film

SCOTTISH SCREEN ARCHIVE FILMS DIGITALLY PRESERVED AND SHARED WITH THE WORLD.

THE Scottish Screen Archive celebrated its first year at NLS in March 2008 with the completion of a landmark project to preserve a million feet of Scottish film. The three-year Heritage Lottery funded project enabled over 400 hours of Scottish films to be saved to digital videotape, including the restoration of one of the earliest British wedding films: *The Wedding of the 4th Marquess of Bute*, made in 1905. Staff spent over two years working with cutting-edge digital restoration software to painstakingly clean up the film, frame by frame, the first of many culturally important films to be preserved by the project.

We were able to showcase the newly accessible films online, when the revamped and expanded Scottish Screen Archive website was launched in March 2008, with clips from nearly 1000 titles. The new-look site has generated a great deal of interest from media and visitors, in particular due to its YouTube-style interface for viewing the film clips. The diverse topics these clips cover includes everything from one of Scotland's oldest surviving films, a rail journey across the Tay Bridge made in 1897, to early footage of Prime Minister Gordon Brown as Edinburgh University Rector, Scots sprinter Allan Wells winning his gold medal at the 1980 Olympics to the evacuation of the remote island of St Kilda, situated 50 miles off the Western Isles coastline, in 1930.

**WHAT THEY SAID:** 'The Heritage Lottery Fund is delighted to have been able to support the preservation of this unique archive which is now available for us all to marvel at and learn from.'

**Colin McLean**  
Heritage Lottery Fund, Manager for Scotland

**WHAT YOU SAID:** 'I don't think I've seen a better, clearer presentation of online video anywhere than on the new SSA website.'

**Dr Luke McKernan**  
Moving Image Curator, the British Library

**WHAT'S NEXT ON THE HORIZON:** Over the next few years NLS will be working towards presenting complete films online, building up a library of moving image titles for the public to access wherever they are in the world.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



September

Rigorous preservation work by NLS staff saved thousands of collection items from accidental flood damage.

October

Ian Rankin opens **Crime Scene Edinburgh: 20 Years of Rankin and Rebus**, the exhibition that celebrated his well-loved detective, literary development and the progress made in forensic policing over the past two decades.



Scottish Screen Archive preservation and technical team members Fiona McQuat and Stuart Wilson worked on restoring the historic wedding film, thanks to support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

# Mapping the way for tomorrow's explorers

THE GREAT ESCAPES PROJECT PUTS HISTORIC TRAVEL INSIGHTS INTO PEOPLE'S HANDS

THE Library exists to preserve the lives and work of the past, in order to enrich the lives and minds of today and tomorrow. This objective was brought to life vividly by the Great Escapes project, which saw NLS working with primary schools in Mull to create multimedia tourist guides loaded onto handheld computers for use by visitors to the area.

Drawing inspiration from explorers' diaries and journals in the John Murray Archive and the publisher's genre-defining guidebooks, *Handbooks for Travellers*, pupils from Dervaig and Ulva Primary Schools used specialist software and editing equipment to produce their own content-rich travel guides, complete with drawings, photographs, film and audio clips that are triggered when the visitor reaches a specific location on the tour. The tours provide details of the people who once lived in the area, including, for example, the grandparents of explorer and missionary David Livingstone, alongside practical local information, such as nearby campsites and the best places in the area to spot Sea Eagles.

The Library's education and outreach staff gave specialist training in research techniques, using the software to create the guides and assistance with how to edit them together. Funding for this exciting project from Crerar Hotels provided the equipment, which the schools will keep and use for later projects. The two tours completed so far, a walking tour around the small, picturesque island of Ulva and a driving tour for the road between Tobermory and Dervaig, will be available for visitors to collect from participating venues later in 2008.

**WHAT THEY SAID:** 'We are absolutely delighted to be able to support NLS and the Great Escapes project. At Crerar Hotels, we are passionate about ensuring that our guests experience the very best of the stunning locations that all of our hotels have to offer. The Great Escapes project has been a fantastic success, not only in bringing the Isle of Mull to life for visitors, but in giving the schoolchildren that took part in the project valuable skills and resources to share their local knowledge with all visitors to this beautiful island.'

**Paddy Crerar**  
Chief Executive, Crerar Hotels

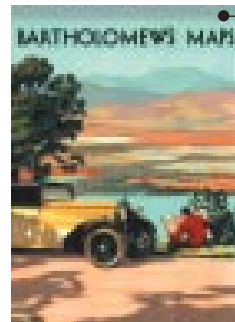
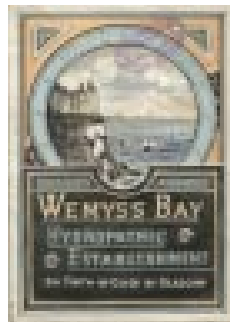
**WHAT YOU SAID:** 'We all had a lot of fun finding out many interesting things about Ulva. We were amazed to learn about all the famous travellers that have visited the island in the past, its fascinating geology and to find old photographs which showed us what some of the buildings used to be like. Now we are looking forward to visitors using our mediascape to discover more about Ulva themselves.'

**Heather Waller**  
Head Teacher, Ulva Primary School

**WHAT'S NEXT ON THE HORIZON:** All the primary schools on Mull are now participating in the second year of the Great Escapes project and hope to complete eight new tours of the island by April 2009, covering topics from the geology of Iona to stories of emigration in the 19th century. NLS plans to make all tours available online and to extend the project to other parts of Scotland in 2009.

To view them online, visit [www.mscapers.com](http://www.mscapers.com). Then download the free 'mscape suite' software from this site and search for 'great escapes'.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



November

Conservators start work on the Bartholomew Archive, funded by the John R Murray Charitable Trust. The Archive records the business of the internationally renowned mapmaking firm, Bartholomew, established in 1826.

December

Subject headings for 'Scottish literature' successfully retained in the Library of Congress cataloguing rulebook.

January

Celebrations for the anniversary of 500 Years of Printing in Scotland begin.



Poppy Roth-Strachan, one of six students at Ulva Primary School, tests out her Great Escape.

# Expanding global business services

UNIQUE NEW DATABASE AND ONLINE BUSINESS RESOURCES AT SCOTBIS

SCOTBIS, the Library's business information service, has been providing valuable business insight for thousands of businesses, public sector and voluntary bodies for nearly twenty years now. Our extensive collection of electronic databases, market research reports, directories and business journals, coupled with the in-depth knowledge of our staff have ensured that SCOTBIS is recognised as a key national business resource for Scotland. The last year has seen some major new landmarks in service delivery.

In October 2007 we achieved a major coup in being the first organisation in the UK to make Dun and Bradstreet's Global Reference Solution (GRS) database available remotely to customers living in Scotland. GRS offers in-depth data on over 110,000,000 companies worldwide, including details of company size, international presence, markets and trading duration. The database is one of 17 electronic resources freely available to all users, regardless of company size or turnover, but is by far the largest in scope and size. It is also the first business database that users can access without visiting NLS.

Our users, drawn from Scotland's diverse business community, have been instrumental in driving demand for high quality, easily accessible business information online, inspiring us to continually improve our digital offering. The latest development on this front during the year was the re-launch of the SCOTBIS website in August 2007. The smart, new-look site, informed by months of user testing and feedback, brings together the vast range of resources available via SCOTBIS with a comprehensive inventory of trusted sources of business information and analysis on the web. Visit it at [www.scotbis.com](http://www.scotbis.com).

**WHAT THEY SAID:** Entrepreneur and founder of *Scottish Business Insider* Alistair Balfour had this to say about Global Reference Solution: 'This remarkable service should be an intrinsic part of the market research capability of any Scottish company with genuine international aspirations.'

**WHAT YOU SAID:** 'With the increasing demands of anti-money laundering checks on both new and existing clients, databases like GRS are an essential aid in verifying clients for file opening purposes as quickly as possible. SCOTBIS make an invaluable contribution to our firm by providing free access to this resource, along with many others.'

**Debra Cochrane**  
Information Services Officer, Mcgrigors LLP

**WHAT'S NEXT ON THE HORIZON:** GRS represents the first step in offering access to business databases to customers using the Library remotely. From June 2008, SCOTBIS will also be offering free remote access to Frost.com. This website, produced by the leading market research company Frost & Sullivan, will provide all SCOTBIS users resident in Scotland with full access to its global market research reports.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



February

A digital resource offering full-text access to over 100 nineteenth-century periodicals goes online.

March

Four Arts and Humanities Research Council awards received by NLS to work in partnership with universities.



Services offered by SCOTBIS, such as GRS, lighten the load for Debra Cochrane of Mcgrigors LLP, and many other businesses.

# Saying thanks

## SUPPORTERS

This year was marked by extremely generous support for our John Murray Archive Project, which is helping to transform your National Library by bringing to life a remarkable collection of manuscripts, business papers and characters credited with generating the ideas that shaped the modern world. Building on the groundbreaking John Murray Archive exhibition, we are developing our buildings to provide unprecedented access to the national collection with a capital funding project that has already attracted high level support. NLS gratefully acknowledges the assistance of all our funders and supporters from April 2007 to March 2008, listed below.

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