

Preserving
Memories

 National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

20 – 21

ANNUAL REVIEW



Welcome

Dr John Scally
National Librarian



When I was writing the introduction for last year's Annual Review – only several months into the global pandemic – I had no idea I would continue to be reflecting on the Library during lockdown a year later.

You can expect Covid-related stories and themes running throughout this document – how we continued working remotely and on-site on new and exciting projects; how we coped with new ways of working and tried to reach people every way we could; and how we're approaching the post-pandemic world with optimism.

This past year has been tough for a lot of people and no more so than for those at the start of their careers. So we hired paid interns across a range of subjects and disciplines. These young people did us proud. They carried out superb work and, despite the challenging circumstances of working remotely, they developed fantastic working relationships across the organisation. We learned as much from them as they did from us and you can read more about them in these pages.

We continued to serve researchers as best we could when we were closed and launched an enquiry service for readers to chat with librarians, which was well-received. We also continued to add digitised or 'born digital' material to our website for people to access remotely.

Another success over the past year was our series of virtual events, workshops and seminars. People tuned in from all over the world to talks by curators, in-conversation events with guest panellists and authors, family activities and storytelling, and workshops on how to get the most from the collections at home.

We also launched new online learning resources linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. These included a comprehensive resource on African American revolutionaries in the Atlantic world during the 19th century, as well as a resource dedicated to 'Sunset Song' – one of Scotland's most beloved novels, penned by Lewis Grassie Gibbon. In a bid to support

emerging writers, we invited them to creatively respond to the year 2020. We commissioned 10 writers, who developed hard-hitting and emotional works spanning poetry, playwrighting, prose and graphic novellas, all of which are available to read on our website.

Midway through this 2020–21 year, we launched our new strategy for 2020–2025, called 'Reaching People'. There's little room for nuance in this title, which was deliberate – reaching people is our main focus in the lead-up to our centenary in 2025.

This major anniversary prompted us to think carefully about what we should look like in 2025, our role in 21st-century society and how we can best respond to a changing society – embracing new trends in how people access information and culture – all while remaining true to our core mission as guardian of the published and recorded memory of Scotland.

We have seen this year how important it is that we are prepared for rapid change, which requires flexibility and creative thinking. Our response to the pandemic demonstrated an agility that will frame our thinking for some time to come.

Many of you will by now have learned that I am retiring from my role in October. It has been an immense pleasure and a great privilege to serve as National Librarian for these past seven years. I feel we have achieved a lot and grown as an organisation during that time.

Leaving the Library will be a wrench, but I will retire with great fondness for the Library, our superb staff, the people we serve and, last but not least, our donors, patrons and supporters who have helped us to carry out our work. My thanks to you all.

John Scally

Contents

Safeguarding Collections

Growing, preserving and
digitising national collections

04

10

Improving Access

Making more of the collections
available online

Supporting Learning, Research and Discovery

Education and residencies

14

19

Engaging Audiences

Exhibitions and events

Developing the Organisation

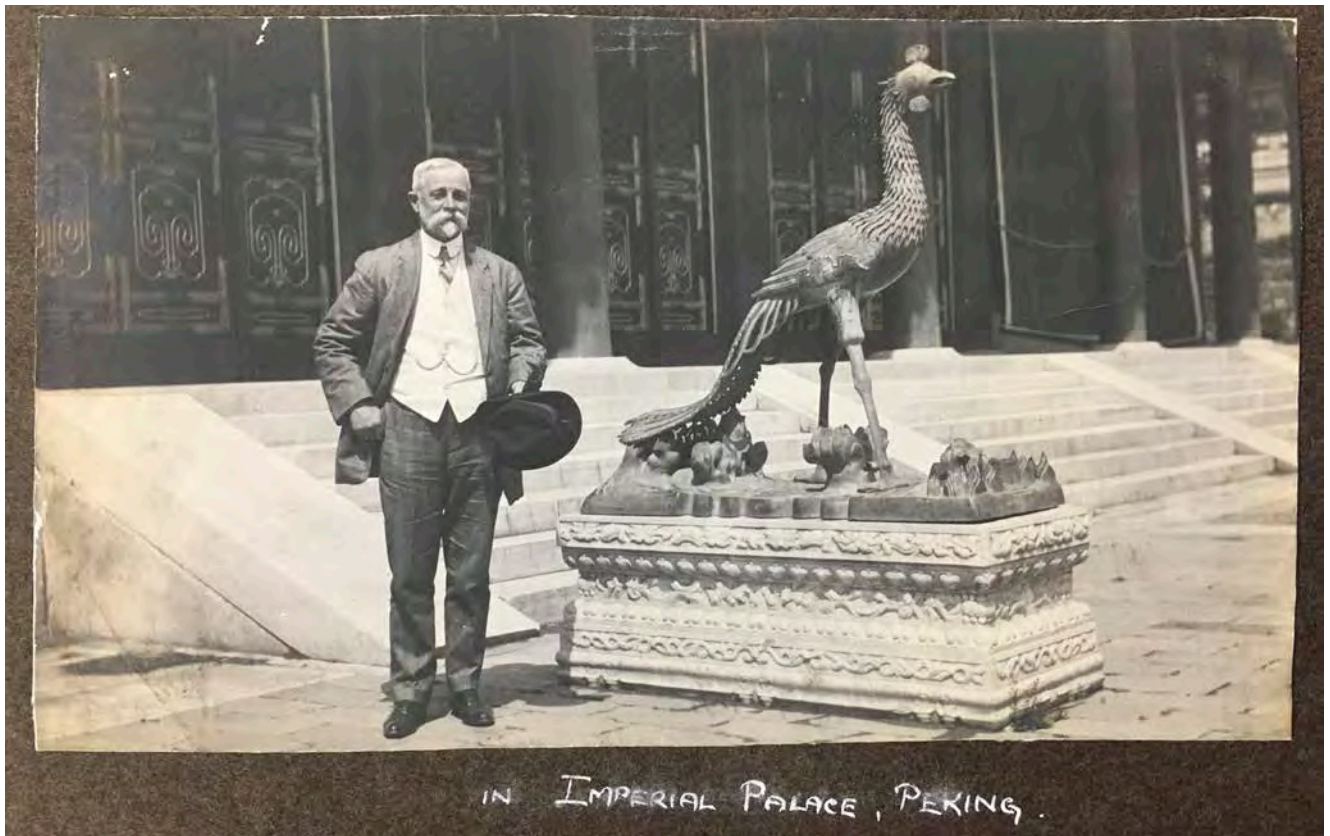
Surviving the pandemic

26



Safeguarding Collections

Acquisitions



Photograph album of Dugald Christie, medical missionary in China

We acquired the photograph album of Dugald Christie, a Church of Scotland medical missionary to China. Christie, born in Glencoe in 1855, is perhaps best known as the founder of Mukden Medical College, in what is now Shenyang, in North-East China.

The album has 238 photographic prints, which capture Christie and his colleagues at work, including in

the newly founded medical college. There is considerable historical and social interest in the album, covering subjects including the Russo-Japanese War and the Manchurian plague. The pneumonic plague struck the area in 1910–1911 and Christie played a major role in helping to combat the illness.

This album is of particular relevance to our existing archives relating to Christie's career and to Mukden Medical College, including those in the Church of Scotland World Missions archive.



'Camera Work: a photographic quarterly', no. 8, October 1904, New York

The American periodical 'Camera Work', published from 1903 until 1917, was founded by the American photographer and art promoter Alfred Stieglitz (1864–



1906). Stieglitz wanted to produce a completely independent magazine of pictorial photography which would be "the best and most sumptuous of photographic publications".

The issues had beautiful hand-pulled photogravures, critical writings on photography, aesthetics and art, and reviews and commentaries on photographers and exhibitions.

Stieglitz did much to promote Scottish photographer James Craig Annan (1864–1946) and his photogravures, and this issue reproduces some of Annan's work and praises him as one of the foremost photographers of his generation. Pictured left is the University of Glasgow's Professor John Young in ceremonial robes. Annan photographed him in 1901 shortly before his death and used the negative to create a photogravure, published in 'Camera Work' in 1904.

Archive of the Cameran Photographic Society of Edinburgh

We acquired the archive of the Cameran Photographic Society of Edinburgh at auction from Swann Galleries in New York.

The archive includes three photograph albums, each organised chronologically and containing mounted prints.

The albums begin in 1894, and end in 1910. Alongside each print is a title and date, and the name of each of the amateur photographers, so there is scope to research the members and activities of the Society. Women

appear to be well represented among the membership. The Society ran an annual competition with a number of specific themes, which is reflected in the subject matter of the albums.

There is added research value in the written records which accompany the albums. They include lists of members, lists of themes and rules for annual competitions, notes about photographic excursions taken by the Society, and a minute book, which begins in 1894 and runs until 1917.

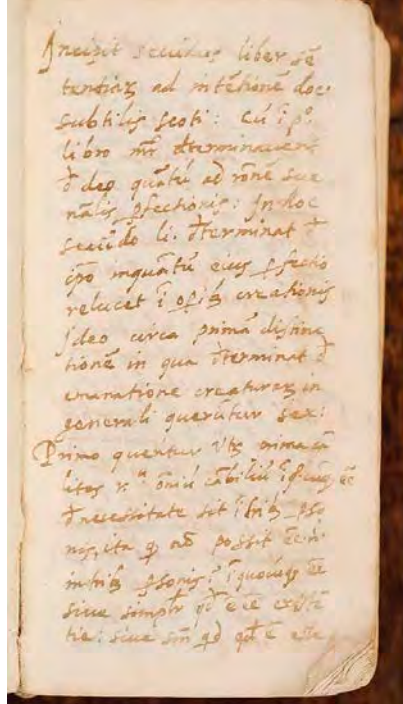
The Society was previously unknown to us, and this acquisition will offer researchers the opportunity to find out more about the practice of photography in Scotland during this period.



Duns Scotus

We bought a stray pocket volume of a text of the Scottish philosopher John Duns Scotus (d. 1308). It contains the second part of his most influential work, the 'Commentary' on the four books of 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard, a 12th-century compendium of theology that was universally studied in Duns Scotus's time. The manuscript was written in 1568 in the Convent of S. Francesco al Monte in Perugia, Italy.

The convent's library was plundered during the Napoleonic wars and the companion volumes of our small manuscript, probably three in number, are likely to be lost. The manuscript is in its original limp vellum binding with its title on a paper-covered spine. Two leather ties are now missing but holes in the binding and impressions on the fore-edge are still visible.



Letters and poem of Robert Burns

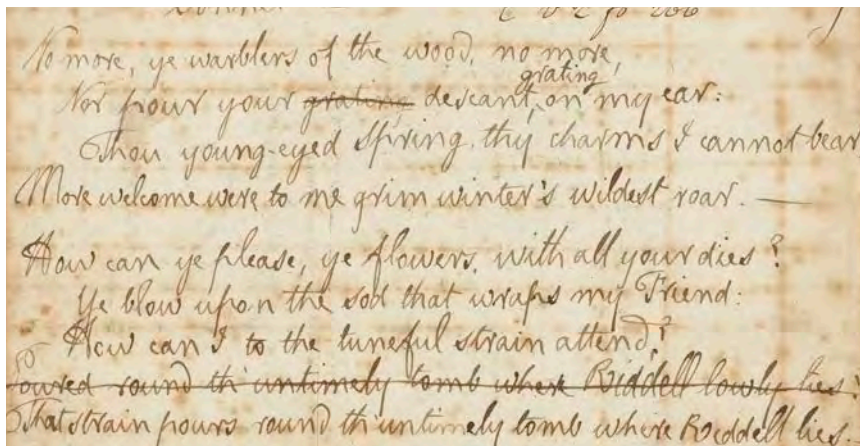
We acquired four letters and part of a poem written by Robert Burns at a Lyon and Turnbull auction. The four manuscripts are autograph letters from Burns to: Francis Grose, on sending him his poem 'Tam o' Shanter'; James Smith, on his feelings about Jean Armour prior to Burns's planned emigration to Jamaica; Thomas Sloan, on a recent interaction with Robert Riddell; and David Staig, on writing poetry.

The poem is part of a sonnet, below, written by Burns on the death of Riddell. The material on Riddell is especially relevant to our collections

as the Glenriddell manuscripts of Robert Burns, held at the Library, constitute the largest single collection of Burns's manuscripts in existence.

Several of these manuscripts have remained out of the public eye for decades. The letters and poem have been previously published, but in several instances these came from transcripts of the originals which have not been seen since J. DeLancey Ferguson edited the letters of Burns in 1931. The poem demonstrates evidence of Burns's poetic process and contains alterations and variants not found in published versions.

We acquired these manuscripts with generous contributions from the Soutar Trust and the Friends of the National Libraries.



Wright, Benjamin

Alata castra Scotiae Regia urbs et Metropolis Vulgi Edimburgum

Amsterdam: Claes Janszoon Visscher, 1649

This small map of the south-eastern coastline of Scotland was originally engraved in 1599 by Benjamin Wright for inclusion in a proposed atlas to be published by Cornelis Claesz. Aimed at Dutch merchants, the atlas would depict the coastlines, firths and trading settlements.

This atlas was never published, but Claesz's apprentice, Claes Visscher, resurrected the idea 50 years later, using the original engraved plates, including this one, and adding more of his own. The resulting pocket atlas, 'Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum', was published in 1649. There are three known examples, with only that at the British Library being complete.



The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, Edinburgh, 1772

The Bible, right, is bound in full green morocco leather decorated with gilt, in Rococo style by James Scott of Edinburgh. It is a beautiful binding with an interesting provenance.

This book was once part of a two-volume set with a similarly bound Book of Common Prayer. The latter volume is recorded in Loudon, 'James and William Scott bookbinders', item Js9 page 34 (owner unknown). It was part of the John Roland Abbey sale at Sotheby's on 21 June, 1965, lot 226.

Both our volume and the companion volume are inscribed 'S.E. Philips 1774' which, as suggested by Loudon, is probably the date of the binding.



Edinburgh Travel Book, by Floc'h, Louis Vuitton, 2020

We bought the deluxe, limited edition of Louis Vuitton's 'Edinburgh Travel Book' by French cartoonist and illustrator Jean-Claude Floch (Floc'h). Floc'h uses his "ligne claire" style to capture the city of Edinburgh in exquisite fashion. This new publication, signed by the artist, includes an original silkscreen painting printed on Vélin d'Arches paper by Atelier Silium. It is a limited edition of 30 copies.

The travel books are a series by Louis Vuitton that pairs an artist with an international destination (typically a city), resulting in a fascinating new lens through which to see each place. Floc'h's illustrations are very much in the style developed by 'Tin Tin' creator Hergé, giving the book an early to mid-20th-century mood. It is not the only Louis Vuitton item we have in our collection. It will join two suitcases that belonged to mountaineer Fanny Bullock Workman.

In the news

Ian Rankin archive ready for exploration

Towards the end of 2020, we announced that the literary archive of the UK's biggest-selling crime novelist, Ian Rankin, was available to view at our reading rooms.

Mr Rankin donated his archive to the Library in 2019, and the subsequent cataloguing process resulted in 387 files or manuscripts that people can view at the reading rooms. This includes correspondence with literary figures such as Ruth Rendell, as well as publishing companies, production companies and charities. Not surprisingly, police officers feature regularly in correspondence.

Described by Mr Rankin, right, as "a pretty complete author's life, late 20th-century style", the archive material dates from 1972–2018. As well as donating the archive, Mr Rankin made a substantial donation towards the creation of a post to itemise and catalogue each item. The post was also made possible through generous donations from the W M Mann Foundation and the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.



Oldest known moving images of Wick saved for posterity

Following years of detailed and specialised work, we completed the digitisation, re-animation and careful restoration of footage of Wick from the turn of the 20th century.

The Wick Society gave five Kinora reels to our Moving Image Archive about 20 years ago for protection and preservation. The Kinora was an early moving image device for which individual frames of film were printed on to small cards attached to a circular core. The reel of cards – like a large, round flip-book – was placed in a Kinora viewer and revolved by turning a handle.

Deemed to be the work of local photographer John G Humphrey (1868–1949), the ‘Wick Kinora Reels’ contain scenes and events that are estimated to have taken place between 1897 and 1910. The footage includes ships and tugboats arriving into Wick Harbour, fishermen ‘redding’ their nets, a storm in Wick Bay, and a church parade – likely marking Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in June 1897. Together they provide a unique glimpse of a local industry just before the widespread adoption of mass industrial fishing.

Developed by the Lumière brothers in 1895 (while they were simultaneously inventing the cinematograph), the Kinora was designed to allow people to enjoy short films at home. A Kinora Viewer, right, and the original Wick Kinora Reels remain at the Library’s Moving Image Archive at Kelvin Hall in Glasgow. The films are available to view on the Moving Image Archive website.



Conservation and digitisation

Keeping collections safe

When lockdown began in March 2020, our conservation team’s priority was to work out how many emergency response volunteers they would be able to call on in this period, if needed.

Our numbers were affected by self-isolation requirements and travel restrictions, so we put out a call for new volunteers among staff throughout the Library. We were overwhelmed by the positive response from colleagues and now have an active and engaged cohort of more

than 30 volunteers available to be deployed in an emergency situation.

Thanks to our remote technology, we were able to analyse live environmental monitoring data across the Library’s buildings, which helped us to identify any areas of concern. This analysis and research helped inform our reopening plans and identify priority areas for collection surveys when we were able to return to the Library.

Just before the first lockdown was fully lifted, our conservators completed a

visual check of all collection items in storage. This was to ensure no issues relating to mould or pest infestations had occurred during lockdown. They completed the survey over a period of two weeks, and found that no major damage had happened when we were closed.

This was the first time we conducted a survey of this scale. It provided a clear understanding of general conditions, which proved to be a timely exercise ahead of the appointment of Mel Houston ACR, our new Preventive Conservator.

New in digital publications

We have subscribed to Ethnic NewsWatch (a ProQuest eResource), an impressive asset that provides current full-text newspapers, magazines, and journals of the ethnic and minority press, providing researchers access to essential, often overlooked perspectives.

Our subscription also provides historical coverage of Native American, African American, and Hispanic American periodicals from 1959–1989. Together, these resources present an unmatched, comprehensive, full-text collection of more than 2.5 million articles from over 340 publications. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the resources is the inclusion of unique community publications not found in any other database, as well as top scholarly journals on ethnicities and ethnic studies.

The historical file of 'Ethnic NewsWatch: A History' provides more than 300,000 articles from 1959–1989. This hard-to-find content provides primary source material across three turbulent decades – the civil rights struggle, Vietnam War protests, dramatic changes in immigration law, trickledown economics, and the status of migrant workers.

We have purchased digital publications from North America, Australasia and Europe on a broad range of subjects including poetry, politics, early modern studies, activism, antiquity, trade, and critical race theory.

Reflecting the huge number of titles published this year, and over the past few years, on slavery, race and the Black diaspora, a particular focus has been on building our collections in these areas and on collecting the work of Black scholars, poets and novelists.

We also bought an extensive amount of e-books from university presses as well as from smaller independent publishers, allowing our readers remote access to a range of books with significant social and cultural import. The most used e-book we purchased in the past year is 'Writing Identity in Medieval and Early Modern Scotland', edited by Eva Von Contzen and L.A.J.R. Houwen.

The year in numbers

2,252,729

additions to our collections

407,526

hidden collections catalogued

11,500

items from our collections digitised

58,336

bibliographic records created

3,031,371

records upgraded for ease of access

6,978,000

website visitors

13,346

people joined the Library as online users

9,097

people from 70 countries attended online events, workshops and learning activities

Collecting Covid

Ephemera such as flyers and leaflets, as well as websites and public-facing social media pages, provide rich insight into what it was actually like for people and communities living through times such as those we experienced in 2020 and much of 2021.

As Scotland's national library, it was vital that we collected as broad a range of material as possible so that future researchers can get an in-depth account of what the Covid-19 pandemic has been like.

Collecting the printed evidence has proven to be especially difficult, because it was happening during lockdown at a time when our usual collecting practices were restricted. But we have been able to archive more than 4,000 web pages, many of which were changing daily, so that the rapidly emerging story of Scotland's response to the coronavirus was

saved for the future. As well as the targeted collecting of Scotland's experience of Covid-19, we also have an even bigger collection about the impact of the virus, as a consequence of something we call 'incidental Covid collecting'. As we're entitled to receive a copy of every publication from the UK and Ireland, we acquire thousands of items each week. When we returned to the shelves after the end of the first lockdown in 2020, we found that in a pile of about 30 different titles spanning magazines and journals, Covid was on the front cover or first page of every single one – everything from 'Copper Worldwide' to 'Ice Cream – the magazine of the Ice Cream Alliance'. It is further evidence that there wasn't a single part of our lives that the pandemic hadn't touched.

We encourage organisations to get in touch with us so they can contribute to Scotland's memory of this pandemic and of how it was managed.

Improving Access



‘One Third Digital’ pledge progress

We remain on track to have a third of our collections in digital format by our centenary in 2025 – a pledge we made in 2015.

This year, we digitised more than 11,500 items from our collections, including maps of Scotland, chapbooks, antiquarian Scottish books, photographs from the MacKinnon Collection, photographs on nitrate film from the Workman Collection, mediaeval manuscripts, sound recordings (as part of the multi-year Unlocking our Sound

Heritage project), film reels, and video tapes.

Following a special scanning project with a large-format flatbed scanner, we were thrilled to put online more than 5,000 fragile, folded and ‘special collection’ maps of Scotland over the past year.

These maps are very important for their content, including many manuscripts, as well as special states of early maps of Scotland.

The largest group includes more than 1,000 plans by the Stevenson firm of civil engineers (c. 1800s–1940s), showing harbour works in coastal

towns, bridges, canals, railways, river engineering and lighthouses.

We also added more than 900 rural estate maps (c. 1770s–1920s), with particular concentrations on Sutherland, Lanarkshire and East Lothian.

Other additions include 450 new printed maps of Scotland, 430 town plans, 300 county maps, and 100 military maps.

A particular highlight has been to collaborate with the Writers to the Signet Society in putting their fine collection of Signet Library maps of Scotland online.

Library wins Wikimedia award

The Library won the 2020 Partnership of the Year Award from Wikimedia.

Its accolades recognise the work of community members and partner organisations in sharing open knowledge with Wikimedia.

Wikimedia is the collective name for the Wikimedia movement, which revolves around a group of inter-connected projects, including Wikipedia, Wiktionary, Wikiquote and others. Wikimedia aims to use the collaborative power of the internet, and the wiki concept, to create and share free knowledge of all kinds.

As the Covid-19 situation progressed, about 70 Library staff who were by then working from home took part in a project to upload and transcribe chapbooks from the collections



(pictured), to Wikicommons or Wikisource. This resulted in what is described on Wikimedia as “possibly the largest ever partner staff group engaging with Wikimedia”.

The project resulted in more than 2,000 pamphlets being transcribed. We plan to re-import these items into the national collections.



Courtesy of the Writers to the Signet Society

Intake and cataloguing

We took in more than 2.25 million items over the course of the year. Intake of books and other physical publications took a major hit due to the pandemic. Lockdowns created major backlogs and this, of course, also affected publishers' distribution.

We also paused the delivery of donated material. This resulted in a drop of around 50 per cent from the previous year.

In contrast, it was a particularly good year for acquiring digital content, and we took in more than two million items, which included 960,000 public petitions – growth of more than 40 per cent on the previous year.

To provide access to these materials, we created more than 58,000 bibliographic records and more than one million records were imported to support access to Non-Print Legal Deposit content (material that comes to us in electronic format).

As well as this, we upgraded more than three million records to improve access and ease of discovery.

This year's intake includes:

Total intake

2,252,729

e-books

186,291

e-journal articles

1,989,468

e-newspaper issues

6,160

Books

18,017

Serials

27,677

Newspapers

13,281

Maps

910

Other

10,925



Hidden collections

Despite the restrictions over the past 18 months, we continued work on the Hidden Collections programme. We catalogued more than 407,000 items, making almost 52.09 per cent of the 'hidden' collections (collections that are at the Library but have yet to be catalogued) publicly available. Highlights from the year include the completion of the Music Retro-Conversion Project, completion of a collection of Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament digital publications, and the global import of more than 42,000 records from the 18th century House of Lords collection.

Music Retro-Conversion Project

We have been moving our music card catalogues online, making the searching process faster and easier to use.

Over the past two centuries, a multitude of catalogues and other manual finding aids have been compiled following ever-changing cataloguing rules. So the music 'retro-conversion' project was a mammoth one because 340,000 catalogue cards were involved.

The work was done in three main phases. First, the existing catalogues and finding aids, right, were converted into digital form. After digitisation, the data on the cards was converted to readable text. The third and last phase of the project involves editing and checking the data before preparing it to be inputted into our online search facility, Library Search.

Due to be completed later this year, the project will be of real benefit to people who can then find out what music the Library holds from home. More detailed information about the project can be found on the Library blog – visit blog.nls.uk.

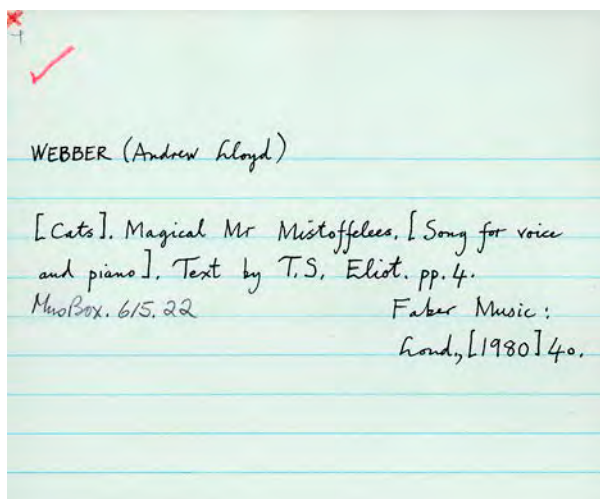
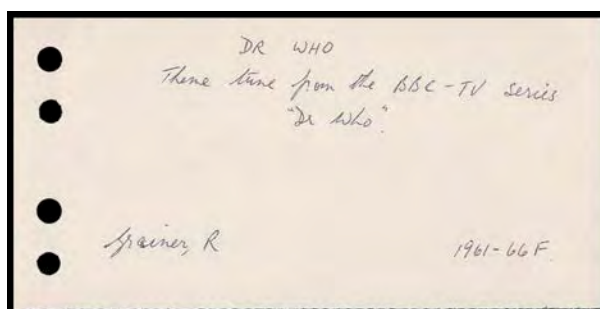
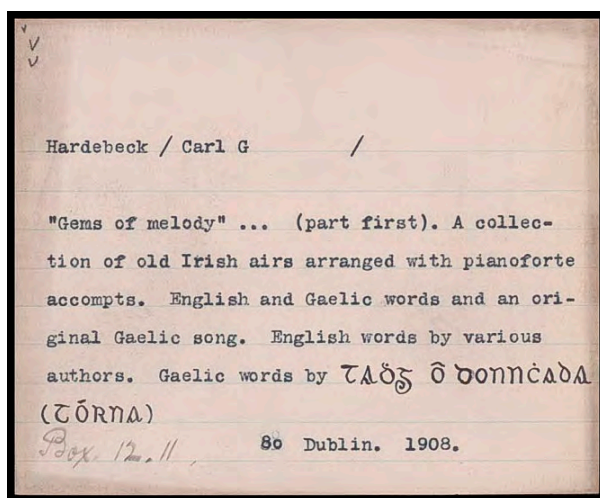
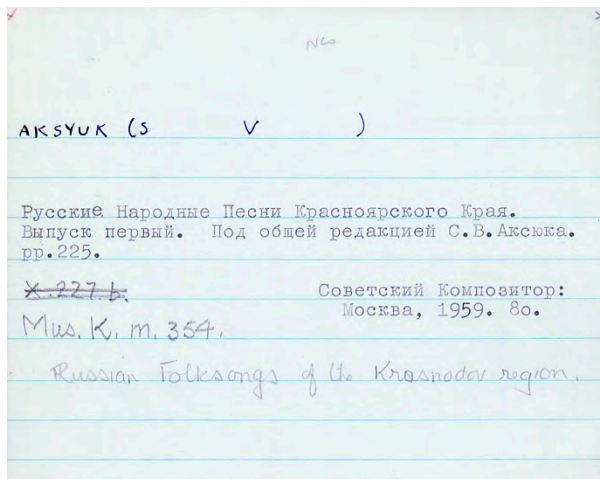
Gaelic Arts access and rights clearances

We recently completed work vital to opening up access to our Gaelic collections. We hold thousands of music, drama, educational and literary publications by An Comunn Gàidhealach, the standard-bearer of Gaelic traditional culture for more than a century.

Yet because much of this material is within copyright, we have been unable to share this rich resource as widely as we would like. Musical works, in particular, have to be played, performed and enjoyed to keep the pieces alive, and so we established the Gaelic Arts Access Project to open up the collection.

Some sleuthing was required. The writers, composers, translators and arrangers of approximately 4,000 works had to be identified, and tracked down, not only to ask for permission to publish their work online and for creative reuse, but also to gather some of the stories behind these pieces from those who created them.

To our surprise and delight, everyone contacted granted permission and so soon this trove of creative Gaelic output will be available online for anyone to use and enjoy. Kindly supported by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the Music Libraries Trust.

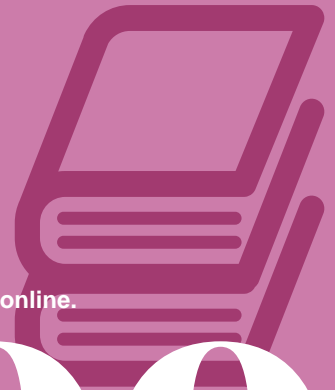


How we improved access from home

While the Covid-19 pandemic was highly disruptive to our work, we were able to undertake large-scale projects from home. This often involved asking people from different departments to join in. Here's a snapshot of what we did...

Carried out rights assessments on more than 4,000 antiquarian books that are due to be made available online.

4,000



Launched a series of online workshops via Zoom on five different topics, including 'Family history from home' and 'Navigating the maps website'.

33

per cent



Introduced a new Library-wide enquiry handling system called 'Ask a question'. This increased our enquiry chat hours by 33 per cent, and introduced screen-sharing as an option for handling enquiries.

FIVE

2,000



Improved the OCR (computer-generated transcriptions of printed text) of more than 2,000 chapbooks using the WikiSource platform.

Added more than 5,000 new records to the moving image catalogue and added 300 new digitised films to our website for people to watch from home. We also created new film-maker biographies and curated sets of films to make browsing the collection online more enjoyable.

5,000





Supporting Learning, Research and Discovery

Digital scholarship

We have been able to continue, complete and begin new digital scholarship projects using the Library's datasets (collections as data) throughout the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Dataset releases continued as planned, with one dataset published every month on the Data Foundry (the home of our datasets). These included a collection of nearly 1,800 Broad­sides printed in Scotland; a series of Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, British Army and Casualty lists from the First and Second World Wars; geospatial data relating

to the Stevenson Maps and Plans of Scotland; and the diaries of Marjory Fleming – our first artificial intelligence-generated dataset using Transkribus software.

Artist in residence

Martin Disley, the Creative Informatics-funded artist in residence, completed his final project at the end of August 2020.

His pieces applied Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) – a type of machine learning technique – to the Library's digitised map

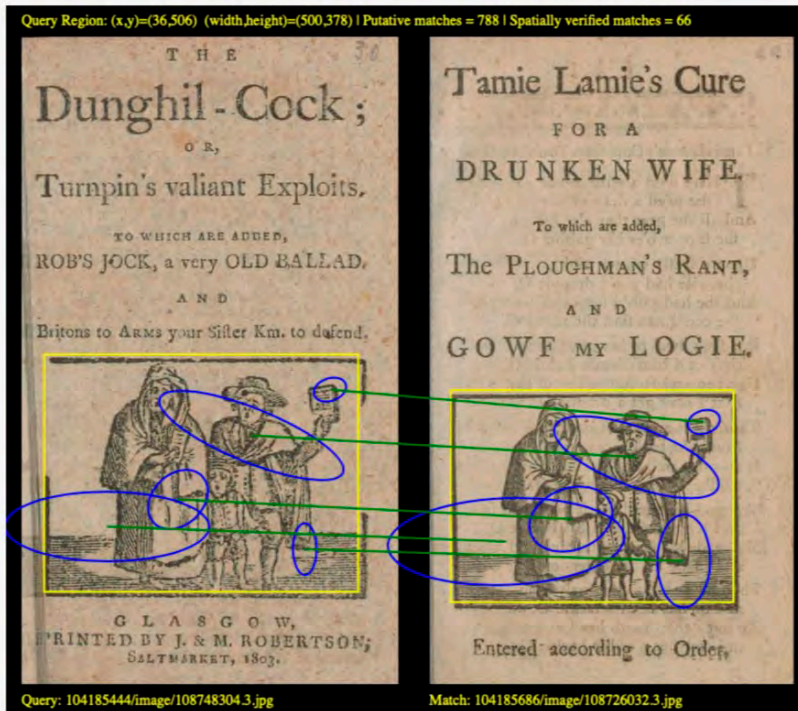
collections, creating maps of a computer-generated Scotland which never existed. Martin's work involved working closely with artificial intelligence and machine learning, which enabled him to see first-hand how these technologies have the potential to be wielded as instruments of power.

It struck him that the same was true of the map. Much like AI, cartography has the potential to advance any combination of insight and lies, to construct reality as much as represent it. His final piece was shortlisted for the John Byrne Award.



© Martin Disley. Reproduced with permission

Visual Features and their Correspondences



Draw all 66 regions Draw random 5 regions
 Draw: Features Correspondence | Line width 2

National Librarian's Research Fellowship in Digital Scholarship

Giles Bergel (University of Oxford), right, joined the Library as our first National Librarian's Research Fellow in Digital Scholarship, to explore the use of computer vision techniques with our Chapbooks Printed in Scotland dataset, which contains nearly 3,000 chapbooks, above. The dataset is based on the Lauriston Castle collection, which came to the Library in 1926 and provides an unrivalled overview of the Scottish chapbook tradition.

Giles said: "The National Library of Scotland's Data Foundry includes a large dataset of Chapbooks Printed in Scotland dating from between 1700 and 1900.

"Chapbooks were small, cheap books sold by travelling pedlars or chapmen. They comprise one of the most accessible forms of literature of their day and were often illustrated by means of reusable woodblocks or metal plates. These blocks or plates sometimes offer clues as to the time, place and circumstances of their printing, as well as demonstrating



what was available to their readers. As the National Librarian of Scotland's Fellow in Digital Scholarship, I was excited to combine my interest in chapbooks with my work as a member of the University of Oxford's Visual Geometry Group (VGG). My VGG colleagues (in particular, Dr Abhishek Dutta) and I have been applying computational methods to trace the use of individual blocks and their copies, and classify the subject of the illustrations using machine learning (or AI). Working with leading chapbook scholar Dr Iain Beavan, we have identified the printer or place of publication of numerous chapbooks and have begun to explore the range of imagery. All outputs will be made freely available for future researchers."

Jupyter notebooks

We published a series of Jupyter Notebooks exploring Data Foundry (home of our datasets) collections. Jupyter Notebook is a web application which allows people to write and interact with live code; Notebooks are often used in a learning and teaching environment.

We recruited a Digital Research Intern, Lucy Havens, who created Notebooks which provide initial analysis of five datasets. These will enable researchers to understand what the dataset contains, and to begin to frame initial research questions using the data.

The Notebooks also enable those who cannot code to analyse collections which would otherwise be impossible to explore. The project also involved setting up a GitHub account for the Digital Scholarship Service, where we hope to share more code in the future.

The Notebooks launched on their target date, in time for the start of the academic year in September, and were well-received internationally.

Design informatics student projects

We continued our collaboration with the University of Edinburgh's Design Informatics course, with students using Data Foundry datasets to learn about data visualisation.

This year, students created websites, videos and 'data comics' of our Encyclopaedia Britannica dataset, as well as Britain and UK Handbooks and the Scottish School Exam Papers collection.

All of these projects are now featured on the Data Foundry website.

The visualisation by students Anastasia Athanadou, Yidan Yuan, Yongchang Zhu and Jingyi Chu of the Scottish School Exam Papers includes an analysis of gender bias in the collection.

Research collaborations and news

New resource on African American revolutionaries

We launched a new online learning resource in March 2021: 'Struggles for Liberty: African American Revolutionaries in the Atlantic World'. It shares the lifelong fight for social justice by African American freedom fighters, some of whom campaigned in Britain and Ireland in the 19th century.

The resource is structured by theme: the Story of the Slave; the History of Black Abolition; the US Civil War; African American activists in Scotland; and the Anna Murray and Frederick Douglass Family.

It also includes interactive maps and downloadable learning activities for teachers, including activities mapped to the Curriculum for Excellence.



'Struggles for Liberty' features writings authored by prominent African American reformers, freedom fighters and campaigners, including Frederick Douglass (1818–1895), below left, Maria W. Stewart (1803–1879), Nathaniel Turner (1800–1831) and Sojourner Truth (1797–1883).

Their histories are told through books, letters, photographs and other original documents held at the National Library, in the Walter O. Evans Collection (now at Yale), and in other US library and archive collections.

'Struggles for Liberty' was created in collaboration with collector Dr Walter O. Evans, and academic partners in the US and the UK, particularly with the Arts & Humanities Research Council-funded University of Edinburgh project, Our Bondage and Our Freedom. It can be found in the Learning Zone on our website.



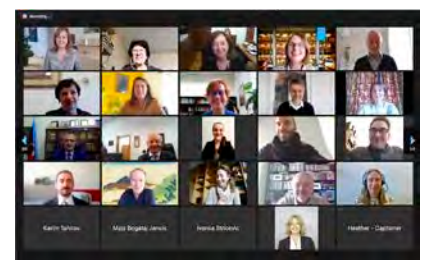
Library joins prestigious European consortium

We were delighted to receive news in September 2020 that the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) – a network of 49 national libraries representing 45 countries – had accepted the National Library of Scotland for membership.

Members of the CENL are national librarians of the member states of the Council of Europe. Since 1987, CENL has worked to advance the cause of Europe's national libraries, reinforcing our special role in preserving the continent's cultural heritage and making it accessible to all.

In accepting the offer of membership, National Librarian Dr John Scally said: "I am very pleased that our application to join CENL has been accepted by the membership.

"At the National Library of Scotland, we have had a long-held ambition to be part of CENL – and in one of the most difficult years for decades, we have arrived! We very much look forward to working with our national library colleagues from other leading European memory institutions to advance our collective mission."



Centre for History of the Book placement

Bryony Pillath, MSc student in Book History and Material Culture at the University of Edinburgh, completed a 'virtual placement' with us in early 2021 to help with a bookplate project.

Since March 2020, curators have been entering the details of a paper slip catalogue of our bookplate collections into a spreadsheet. The goal is to provide an online resource which will enable people to

search more than 25,000 individual bookplates, dating from the 17th to the mid-20th centuries, which are held in albums.

Bryony focused on around 1,000 bookplates of Scottish owners and institutions. She analysed the entries on the spreadsheet according to profession and gender and provided modern geographical locations for bookplates which had place names, and researched individual owners. Bryony has provided a valuable model for how we might present the data once the project is complete.





International scholarly collaboration on Henrietta Liston

Two hundred years after her departure from Ottoman Istanbul (Constantinople) the Turkish journals of Scottish diarist and botanist Henrietta Liston were published for the first time in October 2020 in a new book, 'Henrietta Liston's Travels: The Turkish Journals 1812–1820'.

In 1812, Liston travelled to the heart of the Ottoman Empire when her husband was appointed British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte. Over almost eight years' residency, Henrietta, as diplomat's consort, kept up "a friendly intercourse with all mankind". She kept travel journals which are preserved in the Liston Papers archive at the Library.

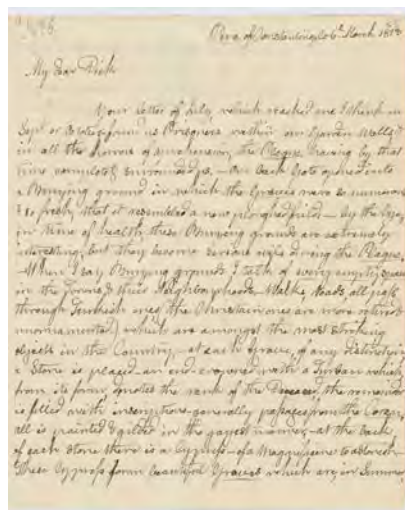
Liston's enquiring voice takes us with her to walk through Constantinople "as much incognito as possible", to watch pilgrims depart on the Hajj, to see burial grounds full of victims of the plague, and to marvel at Mount Olympus.

She is fascinated by the mosques, the practice of Ramazan, and by sultanic power. Full of opinion, curiosity and wonderment, Liston's writing shows her consciousness that she looked at Turkey with the "eye of a stranger" and reveals her awareness of her role in the Anglo-Ottoman relationship. An informed observer of international

politics, Liston writes about Sultan Mahmud II, the Ottoman elite and the European diplomatic corps with discernment and wit. Her journals demonstrate her political nous and sensitivity to the politics of character. She looks at the reputation of the men she encounters and weighs it in the balance.

Published by Edinburgh University Press, 'Henrietta Liston's Travels' is a collaboration between Dora Petherbridge (National Library of Scotland) and Patrick Hart and Valerie Kennedy (Bilkent University, Ankara).

The project was made possible thanks to the kind support of the American Patrons of the National Library and Galleries of Scotland. It is accompanied by a freely available digital resource on our website.



Wee Windaes wins Project o the Year

Founded in 2018, the Scots Language Awards give recognition to the many dedicated people who have worked tirelessly to make sure that the Scots language is kept to the fore in culture, music and words.

We're delighted our Wee Windaes website won this year's Project o the Year prize, receiving the majority of the public's votes and facing stiff competition from other organisations.

We launched the website at the end of 2016 as part of the first Scots Scribe residency held by Hamish MacDonald, funded by Creative Scotland. It showcases digitised collection material written and published in Scots since the 15th century. Many unique and rare items are available digitally for the first time on the site. Since then, the site has grown to include contributions and research from academics and Scots language researchers.





Working with schools

Through our Learning Zone and the Scotland on Screen website, we provided vital learning resources for teachers, pupils and parents over the past year, which was particularly useful for those home-schooling during the pandemic.

The 'Oor Wullie' site had 79,000 views. All Learning Zone resources had more than 138,000 views – an increase of more than 35 per cent on the previous year.

Scotland on Screen had more than 87,000 views, an increase of around 20 per cent on the previous year. The most popular lesson guides were 'New Towns' (above is Fenella Fielding in 'Cumbernauld Hit') and 'Her Century: Scottish Women on Film'.

During lockdown we put together a home learning pack about cinema in Scotland, encouraging families to put on their own film shows using archive

footage. We provided colouring sheets for younger learners and a film poster template for older children to advertise their movie premieres.

We collaborated on several projects with Into Film Scotland and co-produced a new literary resource drawing on the archive film 'From Scotland with Love'. It contains video tutorials and a range of activities for learning about film heritage.

We also partnered with Into Film Scotland and the Scottish Youth Film Foundation to deliver online workshops about 'Her Century: Scottish Women on Film'. Led by Invisible Women – an archive activist film collective which champions women film-makers – the workshops explored race, identity and politics.

Finally, we worked with Into Film Scotland to develop learning materials on early cinema for schools and young audiences as part of Hippfest 2021, a silent film festival.



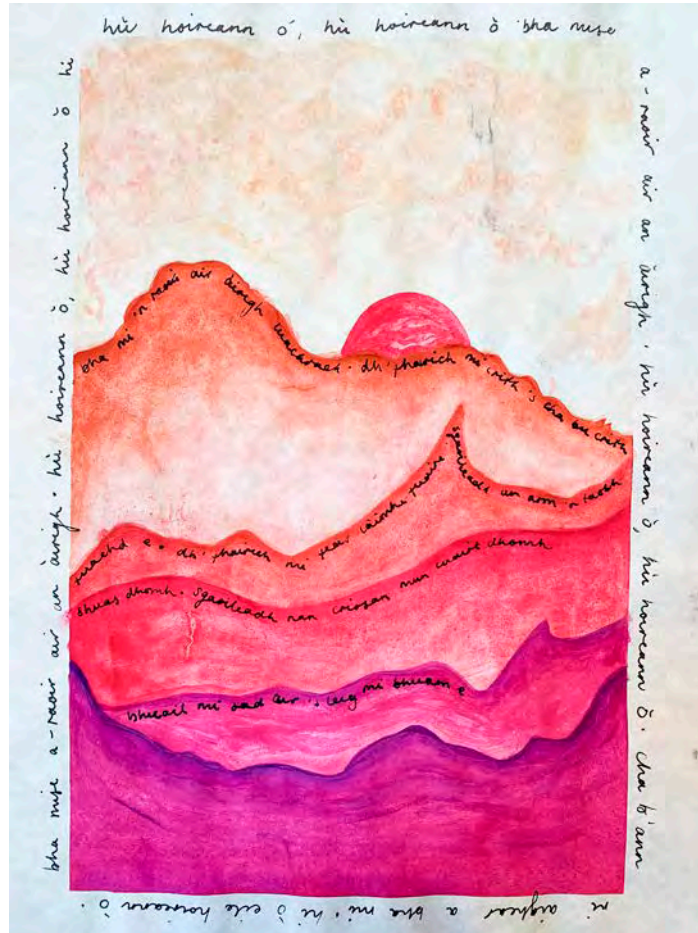
Engaging Audiences

Connecting people with culture and heritage

Like many comparable organisations, our online visitors grew exponentially as a result of the building closures, so we developed a range of online activities to inform and entertain people, but also to connect them in the only way we could. Starting in early spring 2020, we ran a series of blogs called 'Letters to the Library'. We invited colleagues from the culture, heritage and information sectors to write about their experience of lockdown and working from home.

We received 'letters' from the Library of Trinity College Dublin, the Medical Libraries at the University of Edinburgh, Donegal County Archives (Ireland), the University of Strathclyde, and the Library of the Royal College of Surgeons. Published on our website and promoted on our digital channels, we aimed to give people a sense of connectivity and camaraderie, as many letter writers were conveying similar experiences.

We published and promoted other series, including 'Zoom into Scotland', a fortnightly blog looking at Library resources for each local authority area, and 'Curators' Favourites', where our curators recommended inspiring and favourite reading from the collections, all freely available online. All blogs are still available on our website.



Youth Gaelic project

In December 2020 we launched a new Gaelic youth project, working with high school pupils from Edinburgh, Inverness and Portree. The project was led by Rona Wilkie, a Gaelic-speaking freelance educator, and was inspired by 'Petticoats and Pinnacles' – an exhibition about Scotland's pioneering mountain women now on at George IV Bridge.

The pupils took part in a series of online sessions relating to the topics of women and mountaineering, producing a series of creative responses including new written, digital, and artistic works.

In Rona's words: "Leis gu robh Gàidhlig againn, bha sinn cuideachd a' sgrùdadh na h-eachdraidh bho shealladh Ghàidhealach agus a' dèanamh coimeas eadar cultaran tùsanach agus boireann 's na beanntan. Gach seachdain



bha gnìomh aig na sgoilearan ri dhèanamh, agus fhuair sinn eisimplearan fìor mhath de sgrìobhadh, ealain agus ceòl bhuapa."

"Given that we had Gaelic, we also looked at the history from the Gaelic perspective, and we compared indigenous and female perspectives of the mountains. Each week the students had a task to complete, and we received excellent submissions of literature, art and music."

The project was supported by Baillie Gifford.

Going global...

Our online events reached 9,023 attendees in 70 countries on six continents.





Events move online

After the cancellation of our entire on-site events programme caused by lockdown in March 2020, we swiftly developed a new series of online webinars.

Within seven weeks we launched our first virtual event via Zoom. By the end of 2020–21, we delivered 74 webinar events reaching 9,023 attendees – an increase of 57 per cent in comparison with figures for the same period in 2019/20.

UK-based audiences made up the majority of attendees for our online

events programme but we also reached new international audiences who joined us from 70 countries and six continents (see map on the previous pages).

Post-event surveys revealed that we reached a high number of people who have not previously engaged with the Library. On average, 68 per cent of our event attendees were not Library members and 35 per cent had not attended a Library event before.

Survey feedback indicates a strong desire from both domestic and international audiences for the continuation of online events in

the post-pandemic world. This is predominantly due to convenience for those who live outside Scotland's Central Belt and for accessibility reasons.

It's highly likely we will consider a hybrid model in the future to continue to serve people who don't live in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Using Zoom as a conduit enabled us to upload recorded, edited and subtitled events to YouTube and Facebook. As of the end of March 2021, recorded webinars were viewed 17,020 times on YouTube and 35,962 times on Facebook.

Online events in numbers

74

webinar events

9,023

attendees

70

countries

6

continents

57

per cent increase in attendees

68

per cent non-Library members

35

per cent first-time Library visitors

17,020

YouTube views

35,962

Facebook views



Event highlights

Staff talks

A series of public talks by staff, ranging from curators to conservators, showcasing the Library's collections and behind-the-scenes work.

Gaelic events

We hosted three webinars on various aspects of Gaelic language and culture, which included partnerships with the City of Edinburgh Council and featured speakers from BBC Alba, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and the University of Edinburgh.

Library Fest 3–6 August 2020

A series of events showcasing the diversity of the Library's online programme, with music from singer-songwriter Alannah Moar, pictured above, a compilation of films from past Edinburgh festivals, live storytelling and online lectures.

The Rankin Files: Lifting the Lid 17 December 2020

An in-conversation event with Ian Rankin and Project Curator Rosemary Hall, attended by our largest audience of 487 attendees.

Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding Award 25 February 2021

A showcase event with presentations from the winners of the 2020 Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding Competition.

Lift the spirits with Alexander McCall Smith 16 March 2021

An in-conversation event with Alexander McCall Smith, chaired by Serena Field.



Edinburgh College of Art collaboration

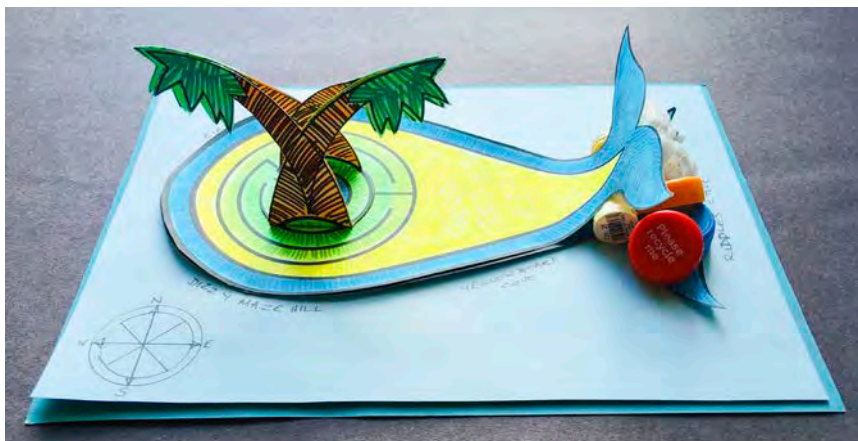
Every year we work with Edinburgh College of Art students to creatively respond to an upcoming Collections in Focus display. In 2020, students produced a series of risograph prints inspired by collection items from the planned 'Stevenson Lighthouses' exhibition.

The prints resulted from a visit to the Library, where students were inspired by material relating to the Stevenson engineering family; the builders of most of Scotland's lighthouses. Their imaginations were further fired after hearing true stories and legends of the sea.

As the works could not be displayed on-site, they were displayed in an online exhibition, 'Sea and Light', on our website.

For the 2021 project, students are developing artwork inspired by Walter Scott's 'The Heart of Midlothian'.

The work will either be shown as part of the Scott 250 Collections in Focus display or in a digital format later this year.



Families programme

Our new families programme at George IV Bridge started in early 2020, so it unfortunately came to an abrupt end with the first lockdown.

However, over the past year we continued to trial new ways of expanding our family engagement digitally – arguably during a time when families stuck at home needed it most. We created a series of family activity web pages inspired by the

2020 Year of Coasts and Waters, featuring audio stories, craft activities and links to the collections.

We also delivered a series of family-friendly virtual storytelling events with storyteller Anne Hunter, on the theme of Scottish traditions and tales.

We're developing family-friendly trails to complement major exhibitions in the future, and we plan to resume our on-site family offer as soon as it is safe to do so.



'See You in 10 Years' project

As part of Book Week Scotland 2020, we collaborated with the Scottish Book Trust to deliver 'See You in 10 Years' – a literary time capsule containing works by six young writers aged 13 to 18.

The young people's work was

placed in a time capsule designed and made by artist Ali Forbes. The works are accompanied by a new piece of writing by Val McDermid.

The capsule is now stored at the Library for safe keeping until it is due to be opened in 2030 – only then can people read what was on the young writers' minds during this most tumultuous year.



New voices for the collections

A new initiative for emerging writers saw their work added to the national collections alongside literary heavyweights at the Library.

In a bid to support artists, as well as provide a platform for the diverse voices that make up 21st-century Scotland, we invited emerging writers to respond to the year 2020.

In December 2020 we made a call for applications to 'Fresh Ink', a programme which awarded 10 emerging writers a bursary of £1,000 for creative responses to 'my experience of 2020'.

Led by poet, writer and creative practitioner Nadine Aisha Jassat, the initiative provided financial support to emerging writers and assisted their careers by establishing connections with Scotland's most prestigious literary archive. Nadine said: "I am delighted to be a part of the National Library of Scotland's Fresh Ink programme. Libraries are homes of stories, knowledge and listening, and I'm delighted to see the Library embodying that in its call to Scotland's emerging creatives to hear their experiences of 2020."

We were overwhelmed with the response – 250 people applied, pitching a range of exciting and topical ways to respond to a most eventful year.

The 10 commissioned writers supplied intriguing and evocative work in poetry, prose, graphic novella, personal essays and a play. The writers are: Amy Jardine, jd stewart, Jude Reid, Mae Diansangu, Nazmi McCartney, Samantha Clark, Sean Wai Keung, Sonali Misra, and Suzy A Kelly. All of the work is available to read on our website and was published in our magazine (pictured above).

Young film-makers' competition

A lot of our engagement activity over the past year has been informed by the pandemic, and our annual film competition, in conjunction with the Scottish Youth Film Festival, was no exception.

A few months into the first lockdown (back when we thought it would be the only lockdown), we launched the competition asking for young

film-makers to respond on the concept of 'home'.

It was a chance for young people to share their experience of the Covid-19 lockdown, and it was also a good opportunity for the Library – which is actively 'collecting Covid-19' – to ensure young people's voices were captured.

Head of Moving Image and Sound Collections, Alison Stevenson, said: "The lockdown affected us all in different ways, making us participants

in this new moment in history. Continuing to grow the national collections remains a focus for the Library, and this includes collecting content from the present day.

"It's important that we capture young people's voices and perspectives of the lockdown, including their version of 'home'."

The competition was open to any young person (under 19) living in Scotland.

The winners were:

'HOME' by Grace Wilcox (12 and under age group winner)

'My Rocket Girl' by Plockton High School group (13-19 age group winner)

The winning films, plus four others that were shortlisted, are preserved in our Moving Image Archive.

One of the shortlisted entries – **'Brother Ghost'**, left – was selected to be part of a collaborative short film about the pandemic, called 'Lost Connections'. 'Lost Connections' featured work from 12 UK screen archives, including the Library.



'Her Century' screenings brought to your home

We held the online premiere of the hugely successful 'Her Century: Scottish Women on Screen' – an archive film about women in 20th-century Scotland – in July 2020.

A partnership with Film Hub Scotland, 'Her Century' toured cinemas throughout the country in the lead-up to the first lockdown, and it was scheduled to be the main attraction at our George IV Bridge building over summer 2020. Unable to make that offer, we instead made it available online.

The Library's Dr Emily Munro curated the film. She said: "The last century was a time of rapid social change in which 'a woman's place' was contested and redefined.



"I wanted to steer away from the 'monumental' moments of suffrage and the two World Wars, drawing instead on the variety of ways in which ordinary women and girls have been represented on film, as scholars, workers, mothers and friends."

Women film-makers feature prominently, including professional documentarians such as Sarah Erulkar, Budge Cooper and Jenny Gilbertson, as well as amateur

footage from Grace Williamson. The online premiere of 'Her Century: Scottish Women on Screen' was on our YouTube channel. Viewers were invited to ask Dr Munro questions using live-chat during the screening.

After the premiere, the film was made freely available for an exclusive two-month period – when it was viewed more than 5,000 times – accompanied by a temporary, dedicated 'Her Century' website.

Developing the Organisation

Working through the pandemic

Literally everything we did this financial year was in some way impacted by the global pandemic, and we are pleased to say we were able to continue engaging with our audiences, albeit digitally, the whole time.

We have weaved mention of restrictions, new ways of working, and new or tailored services throughout this Annual Review, but we could not have done it all without solid infrastructural support. We spoke to colleagues in IT and estates (building management) about how they did it.



IT: Helping everyone to work from home, and quickly

By March 2020, part of the preparation for mobile working was already in place. Our IT department had already begun a switch to mobile desktops back in 2019, so by March 2020 a small percentage of staff were already equipped.

With VPN technology already in place, we were ready for remote access. When lockdown happened, we had a small stock of laptops that we then very quickly built, configured and deployed to key staff.

Other urgent work included scaling up our software licences for all the new staff members who now required VPN access. By the end of the summer, most staff members had Library-supplied hardware for remote working.

Another piece of work that stood us in good stead was buying Office 365 a few years previously. This collaborative platform integrated well with our new intranet. The key target was to quickly make as much data accessible via the Cloud as possible. The Microsoft Office 365 platform



included Teams, which was fast-tracked for upgrading and roll-out. The rapid uptake of Teams enabled staff to communicate and collaborate online with a minimum of disruption.

We adjusted rapidly to home working thanks to the support everyone received from the IT department, which often involved providing tuition on new and unfamiliar systems. Our IT team met regularly with heritage sector partners during the pandemic. This was a great way of sharing

knowledge, expertise, challenges and solutions. This valuable collaboration has continued, with ongoing workshops and sharing best practice. Considering what might happen with working patterns in the future, we are considering how a hybrid model of working may continue.

We are continuing to shift our hardware strategically to a mobile foundation while keeping fixed infrastructure in buildings where needed.



Looking after our buildings and staff

From March 2020, we developed several approaches to coping during lockdown and reopening the Library. These are as follows:

Protection of the collections

Key to maintaining the collections, especially with reduced staff, was focusing on maintaining environmental conditions to prevent the collections from degrading. This included checking air quality and working to ensure that temperature and humidity levels were kept within specified boundaries in our stacks and collection areas.



Reopening to staff

Before reopening the buildings to staff, estates colleagues worked with senior managers to carry out risk assessments throughout all of our buildings. These were followed by floor plans marked with desired routes, minimum distancing and sanitation stations. They then had (safe) walkarounds with other staff members so they could take their feedback to manage any concerns or anxieties as early as possible.

Reopening to the public

We had to consider the maximum safe level of readers at any one time and the routes they would follow to enter the Library, enter and exit the reading rooms, and safe and distanced seating arrangements. We managed all of this despite many people working from home, as well as Covid-related supply chain issues. The estates team is a critical part of our gradual reopening, which will continue well into the autumn.

2020 Annual Appeal for Scotland's new writing



It was encouraging to know that donors to our 2020 Appeal shared our enthusiasm for new writing and its ability to enrich our lives, particularly in this challenging year.

On our shelves, new works which capture the vibrancy of our contemporary world sit alongside the works of historical and established writers. This year's appeal enabled us to support and spotlight new writing, as well as collect it.

In the spring we hosted a series of workshops in which members of the Scottish BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) Writers Network were introduced to the Library's archives, as inspiration for their work. There was a general desire among the group to find and tell the stories of people who are under-represented in the collections. The resultant pieces will be brought together into a zine.

We also partnered with Glasgow Women's Library to host creative writing webinars using exhibits from the 'Petticoats and Pinnacles' exhibition as creative prompts.

Funds from the appeal will also be allocated to our forthcoming major exhibition (scheduled for 2022) focusing on literature, the publishing industry and an author's brand – specifically the reasons that authors historically have chosen pseudonyms.

We'd like to thank everyone who contributed to this appeal.

The 2020 internship scheme

We host paid internships every year to help young people or those early in their careers to gain crucial work experience in the culture and heritage sector. This year, we increased these numbers in a bid to assist as many people as possible given the chances of getting any work experience during the pandemic were slim.

All interns completed exemplary work for the Library during their time with us – even though some have never set foot inside our buildings. We learned as much from them as they have from us. Meet the latest cohort below.



Carissa Chew
Equalities, Diversity
and Inclusion Intern

Carissa reviewed the ways we describe and interpret offensive material (including historically), and explored how we should warn people about the harmful content they may encounter. She also helped us to begin to apply modern standards of description for protected characteristics and other areas of cultural sensitivity.

Carissa said: “One project I found very valuable working on was creating a glossary of (offensive) terminology – the domains of race, gender, age, disability, class.

“This required a lot of research into histories of certain terminologies and I learnt a lot that I didn’t know before. Using this, I started to trace the evolving use of this language in the catalogues and collections.”

Carissa placed us in great stead to carry on this work after she left – work that will have to continue alongside the evolution of language.

She is about to embark on a PhD in History at the University of Hawaii, researching the history of people of mixed Black/South Asian heritage in 20th-century Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.



Carmen Hesketh
Access and Outreach Intern

Carmen’s internship focused on exploring how we can improve our services to become more inclusive and welcoming to a wider range of audiences.

The ‘access’ component examined the changes we could make to ensure that everyone – regardless of background – feels able to engage with us (be that on-site or online).

The ‘outreach’ element looked at how we might promote the collections to the public in a way that is tailored for them – covering a range of areas including partnership working, digital engagement, representation and specialist events.

Carmen said: “I have worked with a research company doing focus groups with under-represented groups. These are people that don’t use the Library and we wanted to learn the reason for that, with a view to giving the groups more of a reason to engage.

“This is quite an exciting time to be working in this field, where there is more of a focus on making heritage accessible for everyone.”

Carmen is moving on to a Masters in Collections and Curating Practices at Edinburgh College of Art. As we have a partnership in place with that programme, it might not be long before we see Carmen again.



Jennifer Stewart
Data: Rights and
Personalisation Intern

Jennifer’s role involved two areas. First, she researched how we can make steps towards offering a personalised Library experience to residents across Scotland. Second, her focus was to identify ways to make it easier to assign and understand the rights statements attached to our collections items, which are published freely online.

Jennifer said: “One of the most interesting parts of my internship was that I’d been co-opted onto a project focused on the Library’s eResources service. This involved going through an intensive and pioneering ‘agile training’ programme, which was such a good opportunity to learn new skills and be involved in an innovative project working with staff from across the Library.”

Jennifer also applied, on behalf of the Library, to SLIC (Scottish Library and Information Council) for funding for a personalisation project. As Jennifer said: “Again, not something I had expected to be entrusted to an intern!”

Jennifer will continue at the Library until December this year.



Joanne MacLennan
Gaelic Translation Intern

Joanne's main job was to translate the Library Search interface (or online catalogue) into Gaelic. This means that 60,000 Gaelic speakers, including native speakers, will soon be able to search using Gaelic terms.

Joanne said: "It all sounds very simple – a nice, straight translation, until you consider things like the fact that there is no straight translation of 'yes' in Gaelic – so a quick yes/no pop-up box becomes a bit of an issue!

"Similarly, there is no Gaelic equivalent of the Boolean operators and/or/not. I benefitted, however, from the support of a Gaelic mentor and freelance translator, and from good contacts at BBC ALBA."

The job became bigger than originally envisaged. Joanne found herself involved with translation across the Library, including for social media, contributing to the web archiving of Gaelic websites relating to the Scottish Parliamentary election, and helping librarians with requests that arrived in Gaelic.

Joanne will continue at the Library until mid-September.



Caitlin McDonald
Creating Media Content Intern

Caitlin was recruited to research the development of an online media centre which journalists and producers could easily access to reuse our content across a wide variety of outputs.

She also researched and reached out to up-and-coming art critics, journalists and writers to help bring our content to new audiences, as well as creators who could collaborate with the Library on future projects which better reflect the make-up of 21st century Scotland.

Caitlin became an instrumental part of the media team while working at the Library, pitching stories to media and writing blogs, media releases and social media content.

Caitlin said: "One of the most interesting things I've done is work with my fellow interns to create a series of blog posts. I've also been collaborating with staff members to produce reading lists for a series of subjects, for example, Women's History Month. I have also helped host climate-related events at the Library, which felt so pertinent with the upcoming COP26 conference."

Caitlin is now doing a communications internship with the UN, specialising in climate change communications.



Henry Roberts
Climate Crisis Intern

Henry's role is to help us deliver our upcoming Climate Action Plan, laying out a sustainability vision for the organisation to implement over the next four years. This involves both looking at how we run our building and operations (for example, carbon management, waste disposal, procurement policies, and so on) as well as looking at how we can use the collections to educate people on the climate crisis.

Henry said: "There is a stereotype of the intern being the one who makes the coffee and does the photocopying, but my experience at the Library couldn't be further from this. Since starting, I have had a genuine role of responsibility, which has been a real treat.

"When I started, the goal of producing a Climate Action Plan for the organisation was just a concept, but with some concerted effort, support and belief in me, it is now an ambitious document which has gone to the leadership team for sign off."

Henry continues to work part-time at the Library to deliver the Climate Action Plan.

Alexander Graham trainees



Sophie Tupholme
Moving Image Archive Technician

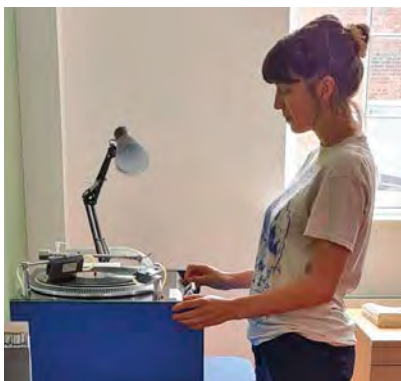
Sophie's role was to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding of the care, preservation and digitisation, and use of archival moving image materials, including film and videotape. It included many tasks such as digitising analogue and digital video formats, restoring works, creating condition reports and adding catalogue information.

At the archive, Sophie has been digitising various collections including Scottish Ballet, the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport Executive, Singing Kettle and Grampian Television from various analogue and digital videotape formats.

In doing so, she's been learning about the idiosyncrasies of these often-obsolete materials and playback machines, and has been practising handling, care, and repair of these fragile formats. She's also been undertaking a digital restoration of the first film shot in Scotland, 'Queen Victoria at Balmoral Castle'.

Sophie said: "This internship is allowing me to cross a bridge from the theoretical into the practical, hands-on elements of moving image preservation.

"The opportunity to spend nine months at an archive is also exceptional – in my experience, internships in this space are usually three to four months at a time."



Susannah Stark
Archival Sound Technician

Susannah has been digitising the Dean Myatt Collection of 78rpm shellac discs, giving her a greater understanding of the history of sound recording and record pressing, as well as technical information about shellac, vinyl and test discs made with cellulose nitrate.

Susannah says the traineeship has provided her with an insight into the daily workings of a library, from the perspective of developing a sound collection. She now has experience of handling fragile formats, digitisation, editing sound files, cataloguing, and developing an interpretation of the collection.

Susannah said: "This time has been important to me in ways that I don't even know yet – in terms of my personal interests and future employment.

"I'm glad to have had such a positive experience of work, meet new people and contribute to the process of making audio material available to people in the future."



Yolanda Bustamante Sampedro
Fragile Formats
Conservation Intern

Yolanda's placement has been focused on the conservation of our most frail collections items, consisting of a variety of paper materials.

Before (the second) lockdown, Yolanda carried out practical conservation work across the two main collections buildings in Edinburgh – George IV Bridge and Causewayside. This included treating bound and unbound materials, learning new binding techniques, and taking part in a 'conservation for digitisation' project.

Once the second lockdown occurred at the end of 2020, there had to be a change of focus. This involved attending webinars, studying, researching, and helping colleagues working on internal policies – but mostly developing a decision-making matrix for the treatment of iron gall ink.

Yolanda said: "If we learnt something from 2020, it is to expect the unexpected and the importance of resilience.

"So lockdown was turned from a forced impasse to just an unexpected diversion. Now that we are back in the buildings, I plan to make the most of the rest of my internship, apply the tools that adapting from necessity has given me and make up for the time away from my bench."

With thanks to Alexander Graham for funding these traineeships.

Funding our work

Income 2020/21



£450,000
Charitable activities



£418,000
Donations and legacies



£24,000
Other trading activities



£169,000
Investment income



£16,880,000
Grant in aid



£12,143,000
Staff costs



£712,000
Other property costs



£3,251,000
Depreciation



£1,760,000
Other running costs



£1,075,000
Building maintenance



£632,000
Collection purchases

Spending 2020/21

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