



MEMORY OF THE WORLD
HISTORIC NLS ST KILDA FILM CELEBRATED

DISCOVER

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland

www.nls.uk | Issue 17 Winter 2010

Eleven men in a boat

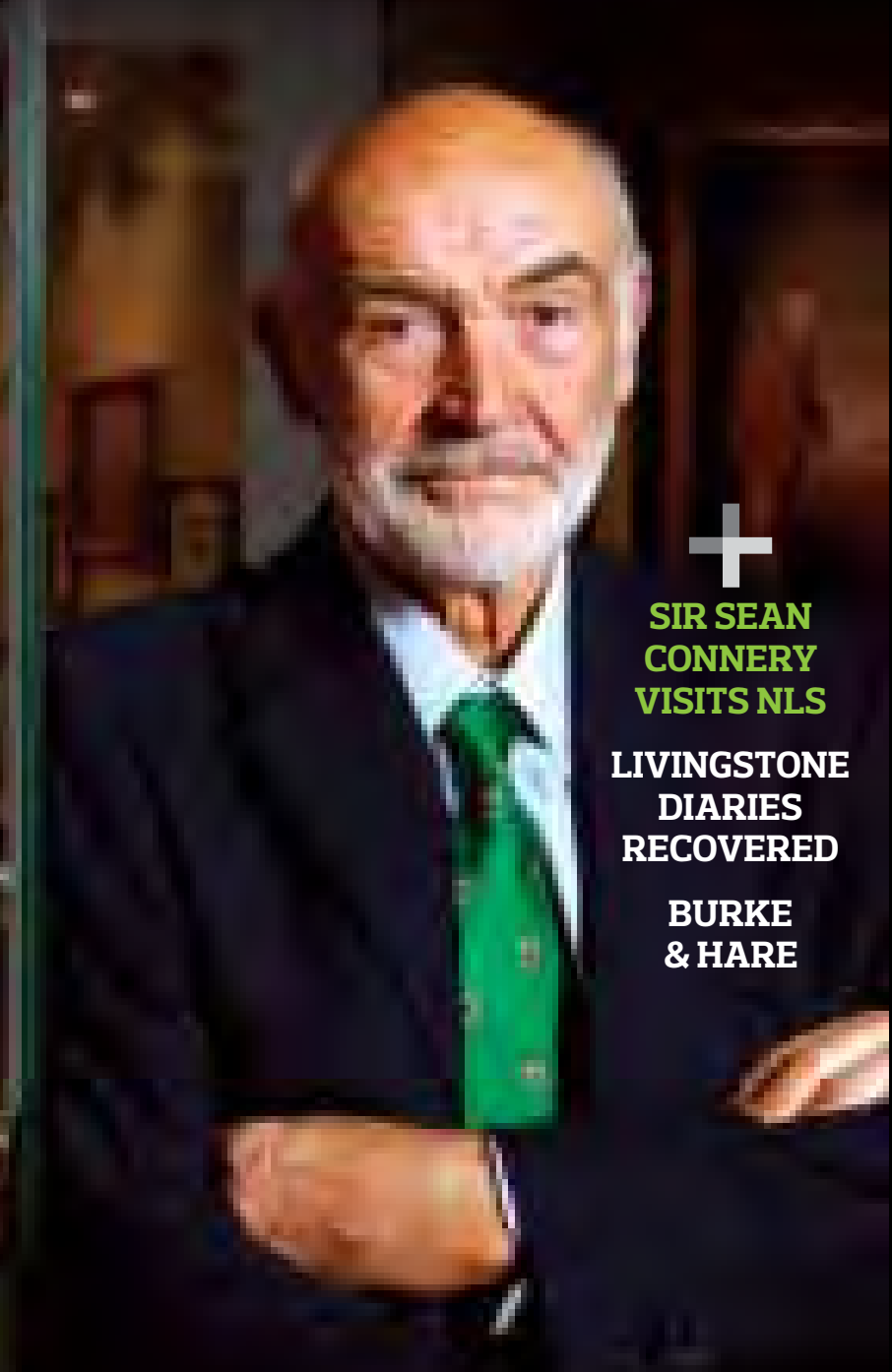
Rare book shines
light on moneyed
classes



**SIR SEAN
CONNERY
VISITS NLS**

**LIVINGSTONE
DIARIES
RECOVERED**

**BURKE
& HARE**



Brought to book

The Library's collections celebrated in a single volume

Every item in the Library's collection tells a story

As we head towards the end of another year, I think it's fair to say the National Library of Scotland has enjoyed a very productive 2010. In this issue we shine a light on some notable recent achievements.

Rax Me That Buik, a new publication that celebrates the Library's collections, is a fine book and a triumph of editing. With millions of items to choose from, the process of determining which of NLS' many collection highlights to include has been a mind-bendingly difficult task, but it's one that the book's author, Dr Iain Gordon Brown, has risen to, as he outlines within these pages.

Another sort of selection process has also served to underline the quality of the Library's collections. UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme highlights artefacts deemed to be of outstanding universal value. Earlier this year, UNESCO announced the first inscriptions to its newly established UK register. Ten items were selected, of which four came from NLS' archive. What are they, and why are they so significant? Find out in this issue.

Of course, the Library's collections contain artefacts that are of lesser historical significance. Yet, as Graham Hogg's fascinating investigation into a privately published 19th-century curiosity reminds us, every item held by NLS has a story to tell. You just need to look for it.

I hope you enjoy this issue.



Mungo Bovey QC, Keeper of the Advocates Library and Trustee of the National Library of Scotland



The National Library of Scotland has enjoyed a very productive 2010



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

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Three NLS web features

1

CHURCHILL: THE EVIDENCE

An online exploration of the life and times of Winston Churchill, MP for Dundee before he became a wartime Prime Minister
<http://digital.nls.uk/churchill>



2

MURIEL SPARK

This resource takes you through the life and work of Dame Muriel Spark, best-known as the author of *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*
<http://digital.nls.uk/murielspark>

3

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF JOHN THOMSON

Visit these pages for an introduction to the work of the pioneering photojournalist
<http://digital.nls.uk/thomson>



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The latest news and comment, including Sir Sean Connery's visit to the Library and NLS' involvement in a new feature film

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Compiling a book on a subject as vast as the Library's collections was always going to be a big challenge. How did the author decide which items to choose, and what to say about them?

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22 ELEVEN MEN IN A BOAT

A 19th-century cruise in the Western Isles of Scotland was recorded for posterity in a privately circulated book that today gives us an insight into the leisure time of the Victorian moneyed classes

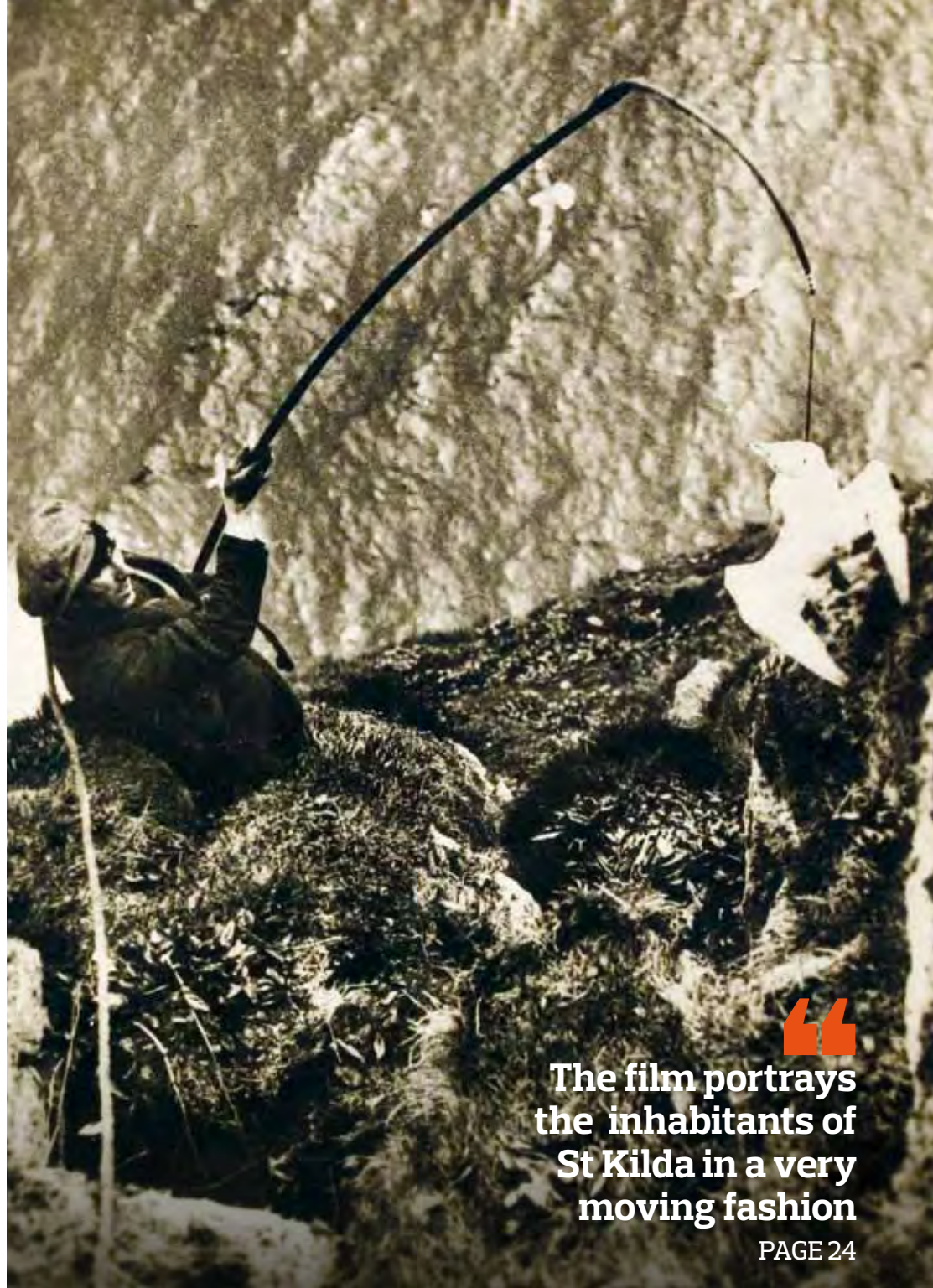
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Curators reflect on the items selected to join the inaugural UK register of UNESCO's prestigious Memory of the World Programme

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30 LAST WORD

MALCOLM COCHRANE



The film portrays the inhabitants of St Kilda in a very moving fashion

PAGE 24

Contributors to this issue include



Dr Iain Gordon Brown
Principal Curator in Manuscript and Map Collections, Iain is the author of *Rax Me That Buik*



Sara Sheridan
A best-selling Scottish writer, Sara's first novel *Truth or Dare* won a place in the 100 Best Scottish Books



Robert Betteridge
A curator in Rare Books Collections, Robert is currently researching the books of advocate Robert Park



Andrew Martin
Andrew is the Modern Scottish Collections Curator in the Legal Deposit and Modern Collections Division at NLS

Inside NLS

Using the National Library of Scotland

With a collection of around 16 million printed items, two million maps, 32,000 films, three miles of manuscripts, plus thousands of photos and journals, getting around NLS requires a little navigation

How to join

To use the NLS' Reading Rooms and order up items from the collections, you need to hold a library card number. This can be obtained by completing the online form at <https://auth.nls.uk/registration>. Simply follow the steps on the website to complete the process.

You can also pick up an application form from the Library's George IV Bridge or Causewayside buildings, or

download one from www.nls.uk. To apply for a library card number using this method you will need to hand in the completed form at Readers' Registration at the George IV Bridge building, along with proof of identity (a driving licence, matriculation card or passport are all valid) and a recent utilities bill. Photos for identification purposes are also required and can be taken at Readers' Registration.



A display at the Visitor Centre at George IV Bridge

Viewing material

Requests can be made in person, by telephone on 0131 623 3700, by email:

enquiries@nls.uk, or through the Library website at www.nls.uk. If you know what you're looking for, we recommend you make your request in advance of your visit to the Library.

Digital resources

With over 300 million items, of which 85% are available remotely, NLS' licensed digital collections are a superb research tool

Art and literature

The Library's digital collections relating to art and literature include

- * 19th Century UK Periodicals Part 1. Women's, Children's, Humour and Leisure/Sport;
- * British Literary Manuscripts Online c.1660–1900; Naxos Music Library;
- * Oxford Music Online;
- * Perdita Manuscripts – Women Writers, 1500–1700;
- * RILM Abstracts of Music Literature; Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period; SCRAM Digital Materials;
- * Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive and
- * SUR Digital Archive.

Business

NLS has a wide range of online resources for businesses,

including **Business Insights (Reuters)**; * **COBRA – The Complete Business Reference Adviser**; * **Economist Historical Archive**; **Factiva**; **FAME** – information on over 2.4 million of the largest UK and Irish companies; * **Frost & Sullivan**; * **Global Reference Solution**; **Key Note Market Research Reports**; product and services database **Kompass Database**; **Market Research Monitor** and **Mintel Market Research Reports**.

Education, science and social science

Educational resources include

- * **ALPSP Learned Journals Collection**; **Blackwell Compass Journals**;

- * **Electronic Enlightenment**;
- * **Environment Complete**;
- * **GreenFILE**; * **JSTOR**;
- * **MLA International Bibliography**; * **Oxford Journals Online**; * **Science Full Text Select**; * **Standards Infobase** and * **Web of Knowledge**.

Government and official

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

History, biography, genealogy

You can access

- * **17th & 18th Century Burney Collection**;
- * **19th Century British Library**

Newspapers: * **19th Century UK Periodicals Part 2. Empire: Travel and Anthropology, Economics, Missionary and Colonial**; **British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries**; * **Celtic Culture – A Historical Encyclopedia (via NetLibrary)**; * **InfoTrac Custom Newspapers**; * **John Johnson Collection: an archive of printed ephemera – digitised images from the Bodleian Library**; * **Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)**; * **India, Raj & Empire**; * **Sabin Americana, 1500–1926**; * **The Making of the Modern World**; * **Times Digital Archive**; * **Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers & Periodicals**

For more information visit:
<https://auth.nls.uk/ldc>

Online

NLS has a vast range of electronic resources, including digital versions of reference works, full-text facsimiles and business databases. Most of these resources are available over the internet to readers living in Scotland (although certain restrictions do apply to some of the collections, in line with licence agreements). Your first port of call to access the Library's online collection is <https://auth.nls.uk/ldc>

Visitor Centre

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

NLS locations

FILMS

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

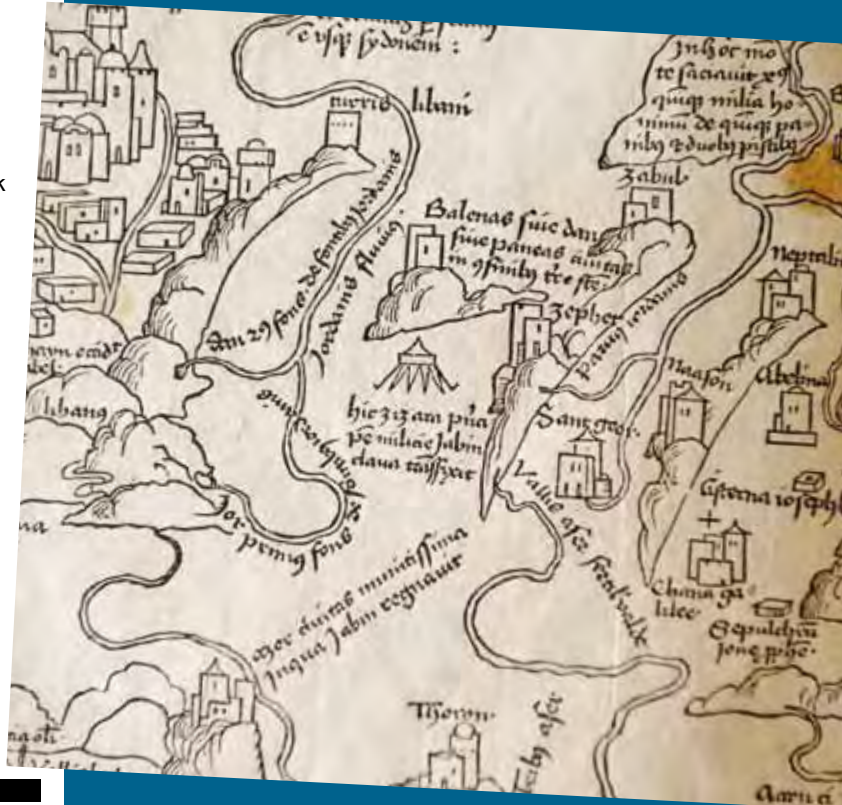
MAPS

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

OTHER COLLECTIONS

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

This map comes from *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (*Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*), 1486, the first-ever illustrated travel account to appear in print



1800–1900, a bibliography of publications, personal names, issuing bodies and subjects; * **The Scotsman Digital Archive 1817–1950** and * **Who's Who** (and **Who Was Who**).

Reference works and catalogues

* **Credo Reference** gives you access to 400 high-quality

reference books from the world's leading publishers. Other online reference works available via NLS include:

* **Early American Imprints, Series 1 – Evans, 1639–1800**;
* **Early English Books Online 1475–1700 (EEBO)**;
* **Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)** and * **Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) Part 2**; **Oxford English Dictionary Online** and **Oxford Reference Online**.

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

Virginia Woolf, the author of such novels as *Orlando* and *Mrs Dalloway*, was also a regular contributor to *The Times Literary Supplement*

FOCUS ON Rare Book Collection

The Library's collections of rare books boast in excess of one million printed volumes dating from 1455 to the present day. In addition, the collections hold microfilms and digital images of rare books kept in other libraries, as well as photographs, posters, newspapers, postcards and prints.

Scottish material is at the heart of the collection, particularly early books written by Scots, about Scottish topics, in Scottish languages, or published in Scotland. There are also special collections, covering subjects ranging from witchcraft to the French Revolution, and from beekeeping to Esperanto.

Records for most of these items are accessible through the Library's online catalogue. The books can also be consulted in the Reading Rooms in the Library's George IV Bridge building, Edinburgh.

Find out more about NLS' Rare Books Collection at www.nls.uk/collections/rare-books





Colin Montgomerie visits the exhibition

A longer swing through time



Some of the items on display

EXHIBITION

NLS' A Swing Through Time exhibition has been extended to run through winter. Charting the history of golf in Scotland, it features historic items, such as the records of the Company of Gentlemen Golfers, probably the world's oldest golf club.

The exhibition launched on 18 June when Sir Sean Connery looked round the collection. Colin Montgomerie swung by in September, just weeks before leading Europe to success in golf's Ryder Cup.

A Swing Through Time runs until 31 March 2011.

The exhibition is supported by Aberdeen Asset Management. For conservation reasons, some of the documents, books and other printed items in the exhibition will require rearrangement or replacement. The exhibition will therefore close from 15 November to 8 December to allow this work to take place.

'A wonderful asset for Scotland'

SURVEY

A customer survey carried out for NLS reveals that 92% of survey respondents are very, or quite, satisfied with the overall quality of service they receive at the Library.

The survey, which polled more than 850 NLS users, drew positive comments, with one respondent writing 'Keep up the good work -

you are a different place to the one I knew only five years ago ... and it feels like you're making the changes without alienating your core audience.'

The digital collections proved extremely popular, and staff were also acclaimed. 'Everyone was most helpful and pleasant,' wrote one respondent. 'Your staff have the attitude that

visitors should be able to access materials.'

Some areas for potential development were identified. A number of respondents requested improved facilities in the Reading Rooms, and further customer service training for staff was also recommended to ensure a consistent and high quality service. It was also



NLS at George IV Bridge

suggested that the current website redesign should consider ways of improving usability for a range of NLS users, from academics to businesses and the public.

Breviary and Bell Rock anniversaries

TREASURES

NLS' Treasures space is currently marking the 500th anniversary of the printing of the *Aberdeen Breviary*, so-called because it was compiled under the direction of William Elphinstone, Bishop of Aberdeen.

In 1507, King James IV granted Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar a patent to print 'breviaries after our own Scottish use, and with legends of Scottish saints'. The book, which contains prayers to be said at given times of the day, reflected Scottish practice and also included the lives of Scottish saints.

The display places the book



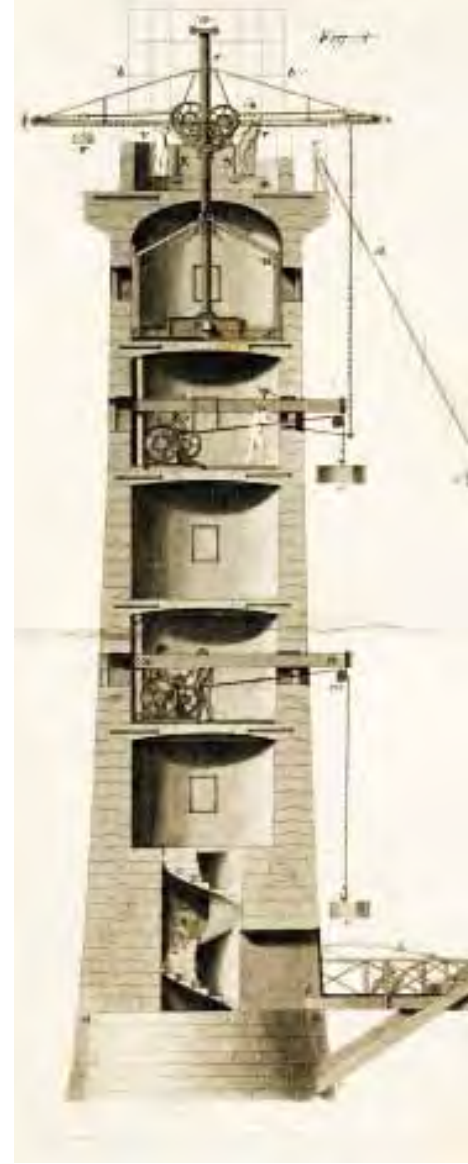
From the *Aberdeen Breviary*

next to other illuminated manuscripts and incunables (texts printed before 1501), and reunites our copy with the one owned by Aberdeen University Library, perhaps for the first time since they sat together in Chepman's shop 500 years ago.

From 12 January, the bi-centenary of the first lighting of the lanterns in the Bell Rock Lighthouse will feature in the Treasures space.

The display chronicles the story of the building of the lighthouse. Construction started in 1807 and despite the most appalling conditions, work continued until finally, at the beginning of 1811, the building was complete and the light was illuminated.

The *Aberdeen Breviary* will be on display at NLS' George IV Bridge building until 9 January. The Bell Rock Lighthouse display runs from 12 January to 28 February. For more on Chepman and Myllar, page 27



Latin Bibles conference

MANUSCRIPTS

In July, some of the world's leading scholars in manuscripts, medieval preaching and biblical interpretation, came to Edinburgh to examine together Latin bibles written between 1200 and 1450.

'Form and Function in the Late Medieval Bible' was the first time a conference had been held to trace the evolution, audience and usage of these bibles.

The long-standing relations between the conference organisers, the Centre for the History of the Book at the University of Edinburgh, and NLS, transformed the event into an interdisciplinary, hands-on investigation.

Highlights included Paul Antonio, a professional and active scribe based in London, demonstrating techniques and challenges that enabled medieval scribes to write in a minute Gothic script.

A number of the Library's most treasured bibles, including the Ruskin Bible and Gutenberg Bible, were used at a workshop that examined script and layout as well as illumination.

Paul Antonio at the conference



Indian hemp users



Cannabis study

PUBLICATIONS

During the last years of the 19th century, the most comprehensive study ever on the effects of cannabis use was undertaken. Throughout India, 1,455 people were cross-examined in the compilation of The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report 1893-94.

Publisher Hardinge-Simpole, in association with NLS, has issued a facsimile of the eight-volume set.

Anyone studying narcotics will recognise that the debates advanced within the book still rage on today.

www.hardingesimpole.co.uk/series/indian_hemp_drugs_commission.htm

Designs for the Bell Rock Lighthouse



Chopin in Scotland

MUSIC

Earlier this year the National Library of Scotland celebrated the bicentenary of Chopin's birth with a small display of material from its collections and, in cooperation with the Consulate-General of the Republic of Poland, a talk on Chopin in Scotland given by scholar Peter Willis.

While many European composers were infatuated with Scottish culture and landscapes, Fryderyk Franciszek Chopin (1810–49) was one of the relatively few who actually visited the country. His trip was organised through Scottish friends, Jane Wilhelmina Stirling and her sister Mrs Katherine Erskine, both of whom had met Chopin in Paris.

Jane arranged an extensive tour of central Scotland, inviting Chopin to Stirling family homes. There, Chopin gave informal recitals and staged two further concerts in Glasgow and Edinburgh. He did not compose any new music during his stay, which was marred by illness in this late stage of his life.



Chopin's Nocturnes Op 55, dedicated to Jane Stirling



NLS curators at event

CONFERENCE

Two NLS senior curators contributed papers to the Material Cultures conference held by the Centre for the History of the Book at the University of Edinburgh. Manuscript and Map Collections Curator David McClay gave a paper on the John Murray Archive, while Rare Books Curator Helen Vincent spoke on 'Collecting Early Modern Drama in the Advocates Library, 1689–1925'. This session related to the AHRC-funded exhibition 'Beyond Macbeth' taking place at NLS next winter.

The conference attracts leading scholars in the fields of bibliography and book history.

Livingstone diaries recovered

PROJECT

A transatlantic team is working to decipher the field diary of David Livingstone. The diary was kept while Livingstone travelled through Eastern Congo during 1870 and 1871. However, he ran out of paper and ink and had to resort to recording his thoughts on scraps of paper.

Livingstone also used crumbling newspaper pages and ink derived from the juice of a local berry. While the newspaper print remains legible today, Livingstone's words have all but disappeared. The project team hopes to restore his text and make it easily accessible to the public for the first time.

The Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project is led by a



David Livingstone

team of researchers from Birkbeck College in London and spectral imaging scientists from the USA, in collaboration with the National Library of Scotland and the David Livingstone Centre. The team is using multispectral imaging, a cutting-edge digital preservation method that

involves illuminating a manuscript with successive wavelengths of light and then processing and enhancing the resulting images. The overall aim of the project is to provide an online critical edition and spectral image database of Livingstone's diary, accessible to scholars and the public at large.

The diary contains a lot of fascinating detail, such as an account of an horrific massacre perpetrated by Arab slave traders on the local African population in the Congolese village of Nyangwe. Also included are the circumstances leading up to Livingstone's famous meeting with Stanley.

Results of the team's work will be available at www.livingstoneonline.ac.uk



A survey published by the Royal National Institute of Blind People reveals that Joanna Lumley has the voice most Scots would like to hear read a bedtime story. The survey marks the 75th anniversary of Talking Books.

www.rnib.org.uk

CURATOR'S CHOICE

Robert Betteridge, Rare Books Curator, on Scott and *The Complaynt of Scotland*

Many books in the Library contain details of previous ownership and usage. One such title is a rare and well-worn copy of Robert Wedderburn's *The Complaynt of Scotland*, first printed in Paris in 1550.

Only four copies are known to exist. NLS holds two and there are two in the British Library. The book's rarity has long made it a desirable item for collectors, a fact which provided some inspiration to Sir Walter Scott.

The endpapers and flyleaves of the Library's copy (shelfmark Ry.II.h.27) are packed with provenance details from the 18th and 19th centuries, reflecting its status as a collector's item.

A 1785 note by the poet John Pinkerton shows this copy once belonged to a 'John McGowan'. Meanwhile, a cutting that lists books printed by the Scottish publisher Archibald Constable reveals that the publisher used it to produce a facsimile edition in 1801. McGowan died around 1810 and the next identifiable owner is the antiquary George Chalmers, one of Constable's clients.

Chalmers' ownership is known from the sale of his library in 1842, when the

Robert Betteridge consults *The Complaynt of Scotland*



Tracing 'a notoriously difficult title to acquire'

book was bought by London bookseller Thomas Rodd. It then appears as lot 4993 in the 1845 sale catalogue of HB Bright, where it was purchased once again by Rodd.

Here it was sold to Thomas Bateman, who inserted his armorial book label and inscribed his name, dated 14 April 1845. The final private owner, identified from the bookplate pasted to the rear endpaper, was the 5th Earl of Rosebery, who donated part of his collection to NLS in 1927.

But what of Sir Walter? His interest in Scotland's history, plus the fact that Constable was his bookseller and later publisher, make it entirely possible that he handled and took inspiration from this very copy. Thus we find the *Complaynt* making its appearance in chapter 3 of Scott's novel *The Antiquary*, as Jonathan Oldbuck, the eponymous antiquary of the story, proudly states, 'for that mutilated copy of the *Complaynt of Scotland*, I sat

out the drinking of two dozen bottles of strong ale with the late learned proprietor, who, in gratitude, bequeathed it to me in his last will.'

This celebration of the *Complaynt* as a notoriously difficult title to acquire provides us with a tangible link between a book in the Library's collections and Scott's personal favourite of his own novels.

www.nls.uk/collections/rare-books

Tie for pamphlet poetry award

AWARDS

The best of Scottish poetry pamphlet publishing was celebrated at NLS earlier this year when the winners of the 2010 Callum Macdonald Memorial

Award were announced. Leonard McDermid, of Stichill Marigold Press' 'And for that Minute', tied with Christine De Luca from Hansel Cooperative Press, who won for Christie Williamson's 'Arc O Möns.'

The award, now in its tenth year, commemorates the life of publisher Callum Macdonald MBE, who died in 1999.





Botanic catalogue published

COLLECTIONS

This month sees the publication of a printed catalogue of NLS' Sutherland Collection, one of the Library's earliest distinct collections of printed books. The books had been dispersed within the Library since at least the mid-18th century and the catalogue reflects the recent work done to reunite them.

James Sutherland (circa 1639–1719) was the first keeper of Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden, and botanical works make up the majority of his library. Sutherland was also among the leading Scottish coin collectors of his day and this catalogue identifies a sizeable number of works on coins and medals not previously recorded in lists of his books. There are many 16th-century books, including scholarly works on botany and herbals, descriptions of local flora and works on gardening.

merchistonpublishing.com

Maps Reading Room relocated

LIBRARY ACCESS

In September, the Maps Reading Room at NLS' Causewayside building moved from 33 Salisbury Place round the corner to 159 Causewayside. The new room is located on the ground floor with direct access from the street, meaning no stairs to climb. The new facilities boast a foyer, where there will be a display of Library material, and more desk space for computer users.

Two initiatives involving the map collections that we reported on in previous issues of *Discover NLS* are continuing to develop well. The Visualising Urban



The entrance to the Maps Reading Room has moved

Geographies project, a collaborative venture with Edinburgh University funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (see p15 of the winter 2009 issue), has

made available online a range of representations of Edinburgh. Meanwhile, a beta version of the AddressingHistory application (see p13 of the summer 2010 issue) has gone live. This project is a collaboration between NLS and EDINA.



3D view of 1905 Edinburgh map with Google Earth buildings

Visualising Urban Geographies:
<http://geo.nls.uk/urbhist>
AddressingHistory beta application:
<http://addressinghistory.edina.ac.uk>

Perth's royal past on display

EXHIBITION

Perth Museum & Art Gallery is currently exhibiting *Skin & Bone: Life & Death in Medieval Perth*. The exhibition is part of Perth's celebratory year, marking the 800th anniversary of the charter granted by King William, the 'Lion', and confirming the town's royal burgh status.

The exhibition charts the archaeology and history of the town from the 11th to the 16th century. The majority of the objects on display have been recovered



A museum workshop

from excavations in the town over the past 40 years, but there are also significant loan items on display, including the Perth Psalter and the Perth Hammermen Book (both courtesy of NLS).

An array of workshops and activities support the exhibition. One such event was led by two NLS senior curators, Kenneth Dunn and Olive Geddes, and saw participants exploring aspects of the history and meaning of the Perth Psalter and the Perth Hammermen Book. Those taking part were excited by the opportunity to hold both manuscripts and to learn something of their purpose.

Skin & Bone: Life & Death in Medieval Perth runs until early December 2010 at Perth Museum & Art Gallery. Admission is free.



A selection of stills from some of the films available to view on the Scotland on Screen site

Learning on the move

EDUCATION

The Scottish Learning Festival 2010, held in Glasgow during September, saw the launch of Phase Two of Scotland on Screen, an online learning resource featuring films from the Scottish Screen Archive.

The website has been developed by NLS, Learning and Teaching Scotland and Creative Scotland. It allows educational users to download and work directly with the films themselves, whether that is to include them in presentations or simply to screen them for students. The films can also be repurposed, allowing students to re-edit them, adding new soundtracks or a voice-over for a silent film.

A new interactive map feature provides a geographical reference point for the locations of the films and allows users to search for content via a map interface.

The first phase of the project provided over 200 clips and 15 hours of film. The launch of the second phase means a further 25 hours of footage will now be available.

Scotland on Screen has been developed to link with both the traditional Scottish curriculum and Curriculum for Excellence, enabling a much more creative, interactive and interpretive approach to learning. In a society whose main source of information, news and entertainment is received via a screen, the ability to read moving images is an essential tool for understanding today's complex visual world. Moving Image Education helps to demystify this complex set of codes and signifiers and a section of Scotland on Screen is dedicated to clearly explaining these concepts.

In addition, for teachers on the GLOW network

(Scotland's digital intranet for schools), a new group, Moving Image Education, has launched, allowing teachers to share knowledge, best practice, ideas and work, within a forum dedicated to using film in the classroom.

While Scotland on Screen has been designed with a schools audience in mind, it can be used by further and higher educational institutions and by life-long learning providers. For those educators and institutions that do not have a GLOW, SCRAN or Shibboleth login, a Scotland on Screen educational login can be requested and will be granted provided the applicant fulfils the eligibility criteria.

Scotland on Screen can be accessed by a general audience, who may view (but not download) the films and use the learning resources.

www.scotlandonscreen.org



Scottish Screen Archive update

COLLECTIONS

The Scottish Screen Archive has recently unveiled some new developments on its website.

In addition to existing options, film and video titles in the national collection can now be browsed by genre and series. The 'series' browse brings together films such as *Mining Reviews*, short film schemes (for example, Tartan Shorts or First Reels), as well as news programming and classroom films. A 'producer' field has also been added to the full catalogue record and search page.

Around 16 hours of digitised content has been added to the site over recent months, as part of a programme of digitisation driven by customer demand.

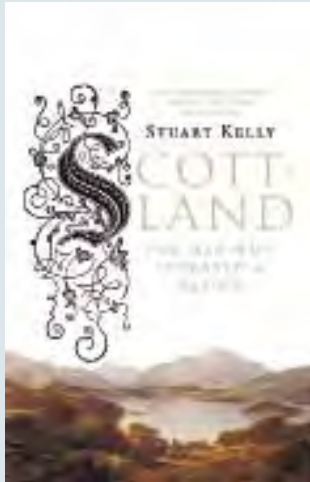
Visitors to the Scottish Screen Archive site will now be able to register with the National Library of Scotland, enabling login to password-protected services and personalisation features, such as being able to create your own favourite films list.

View the updated site at <http://ssa.nls.uk>



Winter events at NLS

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



Stuart Kelly's new book

SCOTT-LAND: THE MAN WHO INVENTED A NATION
24 November, 6pm

Walter Scott's name and image are everywhere, from monuments to bank notes. Stuart Kelly talks about his book *Scott-land: The Man who invented a Nation*, and describes how examining Scott's legacy and character

has changed his own thoughts on writing, and being human. **Booking fee £4 (includes refreshments). The event is followed by a book signing, and copies of the book will be on sale at the NLS shop**

THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES
2 December, 6pm

What role should libraries have in the 21st century? The orthodoxies and value of libraries, plus the place of paper in an increasingly digital age, will be discussed by experts Martyn Wade FRSA (National Librarian), Chris Banks FRSA



St Kilda film to screen at NLS



NLS is the venue for a debate on the future of libraries

(University Librarian, University of Aberdeen) and Karen Cunningham (Head of Libraries, Glasgow City Council).

A free joint NLS event with RSA Fellows' MCICH Network. www.thersa.org

NLS FILM CLUB – ST KILDA
7 December, 6pm

St Kilda, Britain's Loneliest Isle, a 1928 film that features scenes of island life, will be screened to celebrate its inclusion in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. The film will be accompanied by a special musical soundtrack. The 1967 film *St Kilda – The Lonely Islands* will also be

screened at this event. **Booking fee £5 (including refreshments)**

CALLUM MACDONALD POETRY PAMPHLET FAIR
15 December, 6pm

This festive fair is always a popular event. Come along for a glass of wine, meet the publishers, hear some poems and buy the pamphlets.

A free Callum Macdonald Memorial Award event, supported by the Michael Marks Charitable Trust

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

Burke & Hare researched in Library

CINEMA

In November 2009, Rare Books Curator James Mitchell and Assistant Curator Stuart Malcolm assisted the Academy Award-nominated costume designer Dr Deborah Nadoolman Landis in her research for the film *Burke & Hare*, released in the UK on 29th October 2010. The movie, starring Simon Pegg, Tom Wilkinson, Christopher Lee, Ronnie Corbett and Isla Fisher, was directed by her husband, American filmmaker John Landis.

Dr Landis holds the David C Copley Chair for the Study of Costume Design at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television and is a past president of the Costume Designers Guild. She has worked on several films and designed such iconic costumes as the fedora and jacket worn by Harrison Ford in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the red

jacket worn by Michael Jackson in the *Thriller* video.

Although *Burke & Hare* is a black comedy with a relatively low budget when compared to other

Hollywood films, Dr Landis was adamant that the film's costumes and stage sets should be more than just vaguely reminiscent of the Regency era. NLS' unparalleled collection of

rare source materials on Burke and Hare, coupled with contemporary etchings of street scenes from Edinburgh's Old Town, enabled Dr Landis and her design team to create costumes and sets that were as historically accurate as possible.

Isla Fisher, James Mitchell and Simon Pegg on location



Library brought to book

Dr Iain Gordon Brown explains how he approached the almost impossible task of representing the Library's vast collections in a single book

How do you go about compiling a short book on a truly vast subject – one that might comprehend the sum of human knowledge over time and across the world? That, effectively, was the challenge set when, in August 2009, I began to think about how I was going to select material for my book on the collections of the National Library of Scotland.

When I was originally approached by Scala Publishers to put a book together, it was easy to wax enthusiastic at the notion of writing such a work. However, it was a very different and daunting matter actually to find a way of doing so, and of making sense of a national collection of millions upon millions of printed items, manuscripts, maps, periodical parts, music, ephemera and the rest.

'Of all the things which men can do or make here below,' Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle once said, 'by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things we call books.'

For me, the challenge of planning this volume, and in particular selecting and describing items so that they represented whole classes of material in the Library, or themes and traditions in the history and development of the collections, was to prove one of the greatest (but also most

satisfying) I had faced in my long career. Although I can hardly claim what I have produced is 'momentous', I hope that it is (by virtue of the material with which I have been concerned) 'wonderful'; and it would be good to think the way I have chosen to present the text might be deemed more than merely 'worthy', and that it could even be considered lively and exuberant.

Scala is a publishing house with which any cultural institution would wish to be associated. Its books are of the highest quality and its editors, designers and production staff know their trade to the letter. Give them the raw materials and they will make a



Top From James Logan, *The Scottish Gael; or Celtic Manners, as Preserved among the Highlanders* (1831)

Above Antiquaries at Tantallon Castle, East Lothian, in a watercolour of about 1790



It was easy to wax enthusiastic at the notion of writing about the Library's collections



The author, with a copy of *Rax Me That Buik*, standing in front of a portrait of Sir George Mackenzie, founder of the Advocates Library



DOCTOR PROSBODY
COLLECTING HIS PROOF IN A PRINTING OFFICE.

“
**Could
 ‘Exploration’
 be combined
 with
 ‘Empire’?
 Could
 ‘Adventure’
 be added
 to this heady
 mix to
 make it
 more
 potent still?**

handsome book. But the raw materials of a book – text, illustrations and structure – there have to be.

The book, for Scala’s expanding *Great Libraries of the World* series, was to showcase highlights of the collection, but it should not merely roll out the same old ‘treasures’-type objects which the Library is well known to possess, and about which little new or exciting could be said. It was to reflect the world-importance of the collections but at the same time highlight the distinctive ‘Scottishness’ of our holdings: to be universal but nationally focused, while still avoiding the taint of anything provincial or parochial.

My first task was to decide the general thrust of the work. It seemed critical that it should concentrate on the Scottish collections and the essential ‘Scottishness’ of the National Library. However, the Library has always had a dual function: on the one hand, to hold and make available the Scottish nation’s collections of books, maps, and other categories of material that bring to Scots the accumulated knowledge of the world; and, on the other, the Library’s enduring remit to acquire, interpret, research and promote the use of the national collection of the printed and manuscript record of Scotland and the Scots, both at home and abroad, and in every field of human endeavour.



Scheduled for publication in 2010, the book could also be thought of both as a volume commemorating the 85th birthday of the Library (which had been established in 1925 upon the historic foundation of the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, itself an institution dating from the 1680s) and as a celebration of the tercentenary of the Copyright Act of 1710, to which legislation the vast bulk of the Library’s general stock is to be attributed.

With the essential Scottish balance of the book established, my next priority was to rough out a series of themes by which the material might be organised. Broad thematic organisation, along the lines of ‘State’, ‘Religion’, ‘War’, ‘Empire’ and ‘Daily Life’, immediately suggested itself, but many of these themes seemed capable of infinite refinement, meaning the scope for agonising was enormous. Could ‘Exploration’ be combined with ‘Empire’? Could ‘Adventure’ be added to this heady mix to make it more potent still?

At one stage I considered the theme of ‘Heroes and Villains’, which would allow me to take in all manner of personalities from the (possibly imaginary) Caledonian leader Calgacus, through Wallace, Bruce, Mary Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie, to Burke and Hare, David Livingstone, Earl Haig, the midgie, the haggis and even Nessie the Monster.



It seemed to make commercial sense to have a section highlighting Scottish connections with the New World. And clearly it was necessary to make provision for a section focusing on Highland culture and the Gaelic language. I was keen to say something about how the Library's collections reflect the history of the discovery of Scotland, and the emerging idea of Scotland as a picturesque place of high romance: there was certainly a section to be made of that.

Space dictated all. It began to look as if vast compressions would have to be made. Could all of 'Culture' – art, architecture, music, thought – be combined in a single thematic chapter? Literature, surely, would have to be treated separately; but could I ever be bold enough to try to deal with all Scottish literature in, say, a dozen or so items? Printing and publishing, distinctive Scottish trades and callings, also shouted out for separate and special treatment. 'Scholarship' seemed a likely topic to highlight, but how would that shade off into literature, publishing, the arts and culture generally? Science and Engineering seemed a likely marriage. I could let the very 'Scottish' sciences of medicine and geology share that matrimonial bed. There were certain hobby-horses of my own that I would like to ride into battle, so to speak, in this book. But I might need to rein them in or even hobble them entirely.

The sections were themselves endlessly reorganised, separated, remarried, divorced, matched up again or put asunder once more. 'Scholarship', for example, disappeared as an entity, though I felt I might allow myself the luxury of a

section on the theme of 'Taste, Travel and Antiquity' – something very much in accord with my own interests, although, in general, I had determined if not entirely to suppress my known enthusiasms in favour of a dispassionate assessment of what I thought ought to be in such an anthology, then at least to go easy on them.

I was very conscious that the ice on which I was riskily skating was perilously thin in some parts of this bibliophilic pond. As a library with its origins in an institution run by lawyers, I felt that 'Law' must somehow figure: but could I really hope to cover it in a section on 'State' – itself a theme that had emerged from the intellectual melting pot that seemed to contain much of the early-proposed (but hopelessly general, and thus wisely discarded) theme of 'History'? Sections entitled 'Discoveries of Scotland' (rather than the more limiting 'Discovery of Scotland') and 'Diversities and Diversions of Life' appeared to offer dumping-grounds that would prove both immensely useful and also very satisfying chapter headings.

The concurrent task was to compile lists of possible candidates for inclusion in a book, the structure of which was not and could not yet be fixed. I began by trawling past exhibition catalogues, then accessions lists, then my own mind. I asked curatorial colleagues for pointers to books, manuscripts and maps in their areas of expertise, making it clear nevertheless that few of these suggestions were likely find themselves in any final selection. By these methods, and with a great deal of agonising, an initial pool of perhaps 1,000 books,

Top Left An author checks his proofs, from *The Tour of Doctor Prosody, in Search of the Antique and Picturesque, through Scotland* (1821) by William Combe

Bottom Left The Anglo-Scottish parliamentary Union symbolised in the binding of a copy of Elkanah Settle, *Carmen Irenicum. The Union of the Imperial Crowns of Great Britain. An Heroick Poem* (1707)

Above 'Lady Grey in her element', a watercolour of about 1850



Visual appeal was paramount. This led to a preponderance of the watercolour or the copperplate engraving, over the manuscript letter or the austere title–page

manuscripts, maps, official papers, bindings, and other categories of material was arrived at. Subsequent culls, beginning with those for which the most appropriate pruning instruments were the metaphorical machete and loppers followed by more delicate secateurs, and the techniques slash-and-burn, shading off into gentle pruning and even topiary work, resulted in a penultimate selection of some 300 items. This had in turn to be reduced by about half.

As the book is highly illustrated (every item discussed is shown, often in full colour), visual appeal was paramount. This led to a preponderance of the watercolour or the copperplate engraving, the map or the attractive book-binding, the fine specimen of printing or the striking book illustration, over the manuscript letter (no matter how inherently significant), or the austere title page (no matter how world-shattering may have been the work that followed behind). The skill of the designer in permitting so many full-page images impressed me greatly.

The title – *Rax Me That Buik* – perhaps needs some explanation. It means ‘reach me that book’ and is the motto of the former Scottish Central Library for Students, subsumed into the National Library in 1974. The phrase is carved above the door of that institution’s former building in the Lawnmarket, now the administrative headquarters of NLS. It in turn is based upon a remark made by a minister in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the 1790s, in search of a bible to which he needed to refer. By extrapolation, I see the phrase as indicative of the Library’s role in knowledge provision through supplying access to books (and manuscripts, maps, musical scores and so on) as containers of information for all who need to consult them. I hope that readers of *Discover NLS* might choose to search out *Rax Me That Buik* and consult its pages to celebrate a fraction of the Library’s many highlights.

Rax Me That Buik (£16.95) by Dr Iain Gordon Brown (published by Scala Publishers Ltd) can be purchased at the Library’s Visitor Centre and from leading bookshops



Top An image of the Second World War from the diary of Hiram Sturdy

Bottom A plate from a veterinary textbook, *The Parfait Mareschal, or Compleat Farrier* (1696)



Interior of the Advocates Library

The Advocates Library

Before NLS, there was the Library of the Faculty of Advocates.

Founded in 1682, in 1710 the Advocates Library was given the right to claim a copy of every book published in Britain. But by the 1920s, the upkeep was becoming too much for a private body. So the Faculty of Advocates presented their library to the nation. An Act of Parliament formally constituted NLS in 1925.

‘The founding of NLS

is not just a matter of history, but sets the tone for the continuing close relationship between NLS and the Faculty of Advocates,’ says Mungo Bovey, QC, Keeper of the Advocates Library. ‘We are close, not just because of our historical connection, but because the Faculty of Advocates has an involvement in the governance of NLS, which is an important aspect of our role in civic life.’

Just three questions

There is a lot to learn about NLS, but we're getting there – one question at a time



The mysterious Nessie

Q What is the most mysterious item held in the Library's collection?

I can't think of anything more mysterious in Scotland than the Loch Ness Monster. There have been hundreds of books written about that particular character – Ted Hughes and Doctor Who are among those who have been involved in the quest. I think one Scottish writer, however, has summed up the Loch Ness Monster best of all. He has not explained the mystery, but has added another layer to the myth.

Edwin Morgan's 'The Loch Ness Monster's Song', first published by Carcanet Press in From Glasgow to Saturn in 1973, opens with the lines

*Sssnnwhuffffll?
Hnwhuffl hhnwfl hnfl hfl?
Gdroblboblhobngbl gbl gl g g g g lbg.*

And so it goes on. No glossary is supplied. It is up to the reader to make the connection with the beast. What is he saying? Is he fed up with his cold lonely life, fed up with the tourists on the banks of the loch? Is he swearing? Who knows. It is a Loch Ness Monster mystery.

Andrew Martin, Curator of Modern Scottish Collections

MARY EVANS

Q How can NLS help me research my family tree?

Most people in Scotland who want to research their family tree will begin with the basics: births, deaths and marriages. For that, scotlandspeople.gov.uk is a good place to go.

However, if you then want to put some more flesh on the bones, NLS is a very useful resource. Using our trade and professional directories, you can find information about your ancestor's occupation, and using our map collections you can look at the area where they lived or worked, as portrayed on a map dating from their time.

Of course, your ancestors might have made their mark on history, so looking through our newspaper collections could turn up a story about them, and our Scottish Screen Archive holds lots of footage of local Scottish events, so you might spot your great grandparent in an old film.

We also run monthly workshops on how the Library can help your research. You can book a place at www.nls.uk/events
Louise McCarron, Head of Reference Services



Q I've heard old film needs to be stored in the fridge – is that true?

The colder and drier you can keep film the better. NLS, for example, stores its films in an environmentally controlled vault at a temperature of 4 degrees Celsius, with relative humidity of 30%. However, a fridge is not a good idea, as harmful condensation can form. You should also avoid storing film in a freezer as ice could form on it.

The best you can do if you have an old celluloid film is to place it in a metal container. A biscuit tin will work if you can't find anything else. Then find a space in the house without big fluctuations in temperature and humidity. Avoid areas next to heaters or in direct sunlight, and spaces where dampness could be a problem. Store the can flat on its surface, not on its edge.

Janet McBain, Scottish Screen Archive Curator



Family portrait from a photo album, taken around 1870

Eleven men in a boat

A privately published book from the 19th-century shines a light on the moneyed classes at play in Victorian Scotland. Senior Rare Books Curator **Graham Hogg** investigates



Books printed for private circulation have always been regarded as luxury items. They often cover esoteric subjects and are usually produced in small numbers. Such rare books can fall through the legal deposit net by which NLS, and before it the Advocates Library, acquire contemporary British publications. The Library has, however, recently purchased a 19th-century book which is a striking example of how it was relatively easy for wealthy individuals, with access to improved printing technology, to produce lavishly illustrated books to be given away as keepsakes.

The Tail of the Beagle, Ship! Ahoy! is one such title. It describes the maiden voyage in 1864 of the 500-ton screw-steam yacht, the *Beagle*. That inaugural trip was a cruise around the Western Isles of Scotland, and was organised by the shipping magnate John Burns (1829-1901), who was later to become the first Baron Inverclyde.

The *Beagle's* 11-day journey started from Castle Wemyss, near Largs, on 26 July 1864, bound for the Isle of Lewis. There were, appropriately, 11 male passengers on board – the so-called ‘Beagles’, who were all part of Burns’ social circle. They comprised the great and good of Victorian society, including Colonels Lockhart and Ross of the 92nd and 93rd

Highlanders, who had commanded their troops with distinction in the Crimean War and Indian Mutiny (John Burns had also been in the Crimea at the fall of Sevastopol in 1855).

Another ‘Beagle’ was John ‘Rob Roy’ MacGregor (1825-92) – barrister, traveller and intrepid canoeist. Philanthropy appears to have brought Burns and MacGregor together. MacGregor was heavily involved in the establishment of ‘ragged schools’ in Britain (free schools for poor children); Burns was

Above
Sailing to Lewis, was a popular pastime of rich Victorians
Top Right
John Burns
Bottom Right
John MacGregor



The passengers of the Beagle

also involved in youth training, becoming president of the Clyde Industrial Training Ship Association, which trained destitute boys for careers in the merchant navy and the Glasgow Foundry Boys Religious Society. MacGregor had written and illustrated books about his various travel expeditions and he kept, presumably at the request of John Burns, an alternative log of the cruise, written in a whimsical style reminiscent of the humorous periodical *Punch*, to which he had contributed articles.

The entries in MacGregor's log were illustrated with caricatures of fellow shipmates, along with sketches of the various incidents that befell them during the journey. His brief, tongue-in-cheek account of the cruise, supplemented with photographic reproductions of entries from his log, made up *The Tail of the Beagle*.

The book was printed for John Burns in 1865, bound in a handsome dark green cloth binding with gilt lettering. The cover may have been suitably impressive but the subject matter was rather slight; MacGregor's account is simply a tale of 'how 11 individuals enjoyed 11 days in a fine yacht', sightseeing, fishing and swapping yarns. With a 29-strong crew to see to their every need, the 'Beagles' did not want for anything; their host, however, was a deeply religious, teetotal non-smoker, so the cruise must have been a relatively sober one. Moreover, 'JB' believed in the benefits of daily cold showers, described by MacGregor as 'matitutinal artificial refrigeration,' and insisted that every morning his fellow passengers also endured a hosing down on deck, with only a canvas screen to preserve their modesty.

John Burns would have thought little of the trouble and expense of having a few copies of a book printed. His father, George, and uncle, James, had built up a hugely profitable shipping business, graduating from running the mail services between Greenock, Liverpool, Belfast and Londonderry to founding a consortium to finance a mail shipping line between Liverpool and the USA, which would become the world-famous Cunard Line.

After George Burns retired from business in 1860, his son John was able to expand the family's wealth and influence through shrewd social networking. He founded the Gaiter Club, based on his own student love of hill walking. He used this



organisation as a way to keep in contact with the 'movers and shakers' of Victorian society, by organising walking tours of Scotland, with gaiters as the required form of dress, and an annual dinner where members were required to make humorous speeches. Its members included the Prime Minister Lord Palmerston. In *The Tail of the Beagle*, MacGregor reveals that eight of the 11 'Beagles' were members of the Gaiter Club, and asks, 'Persevering readers, still perusing, do you know what is a Gaiter? Are you a Gaiter? If not, you are nobody.'

The Burns' luxurious Castle Wemyss Estate became a fashionable destination for many 19th-century celebrities, including the novelist Anthony Trollope. The Burns family cultivated a friendship with Trollope for several years. They had cornered the market in mail shipments between Britain and Ireland, and, as a senior official of the Post Office in Ireland in the 1840s and 50s, Trollope was an important man to know. It is therefore no surprise that he, as a valued contact and fellow-'Gaiter', was invited on

a cruise in a ship from the Burns fleet and was subsequently involved in producing another souvenir publication for the Burns family. *How the 'Mastiffs' Went to Iceland* is Trollope's humorous account of a cruise to Iceland, hosted by John Burns and his wife. The cruise took place in June and July 1878 in a steamship named the Mastiff. Trollope's book was privately printed and illustrated with photographs and drawings by the Scottish artist Jemima Blackburn.

Whereas Trollope's account was printed by Virtue & Co. of London and designed for wider distribution as a kind of marketing tool for the firm of J. & G. Burns, *The Tail of the Beagle*, which has no imprint, appears to have been simply a memento for distribution to family and friends. The university libraries of Glasgow, Oxford and Harvard are the only other major collections to hold copies of the book. The souvenir of the Beagle's inaugural cruise has, however, lasted far longer than the ship itself. In November 1865, just over a year after its maiden voyage, it was involved in a collision with another ship off the coast of the south west of Scotland, near the Cumbrae islands, and sank.



"Persevering readers, still perusing, do you know what is a Gaiter? Are you a Gaiter? If not, you are nobody"



Filmmaker Paul Robello demonstrating moving picture apparatus to Hebridean children.

Memory of the world

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's Memory of the World Register is a global catalogue of heritage, focusing on artefacts of outstanding universal value. Earlier this year, UNESCO announced the first inscriptions to its newly established UK register. Of the ten items selected, an impressive four have come from NLS' collections. Here, four of the Library's curators explain the worldwide significance of the chosen artefacts



Fowlers snaring fulmar at St Kilda

An older
island
inhabitant



St Kilda, Britain's Loneliest Isle (1928)

Silent film preserves a community disinclined to court publicity

The significance of St Kilda has been recognised by UNESCO with the award of World Heritage Site status. The 1928 cinematograph film *St Kilda, Britain's Loneliest Isle*, is an invaluable element in the heritage connected to the site, portraying its inhabitants in a moving and timeless fashion. It permits us to witness aspects of life on Hirta (the largest of St Kilda's islands) just prior to its evacuation in 1930.

By the mid-1920s, there was speculation concerning the future of St Kilda, including talk of uprooting the whole community, which would signal the end of two millennia of human habitation. A short film made there in 1908 captured the islanders going happily about their daily business and even posing for the visitors' cameras. *St Kilda, Britain's Loneliest Isle* has a different mood, arguably depicting a community in decline.

There are five other known films shot on Hirta, between the arrival of film cameras and the evacuation of 1930, which means we cannot describe *St Kilda, Britain's Loneliest Isle* as unique. However, in heritage terms it is one amongst a paucity of moving images that record the island while it was inhabited, earning it a rightful place on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register.

Janet McBain, Scottish Screen Archive Curator

St Kilda, Britain's Loneliest Isle (1928), a 35mm b&w silent film, produced by Topical Productions, Glasgow for John McCallum and Co. Steamship Operators, can be viewed at <http://ssa.nls.uk/film.cfm?fid=0418>

Pont's map of
Loch Earn and
Ben Vorlich



The Pont manuscript maps (1583–1614)

Mapping Scotland for the first time was a dangerous undertaking for a minister

One of Scotland's greatest geographic and cartographic treasures, the Pont manuscript maps are the earliest surviving detailed maps and topographical descriptions of Scotland. Seventy-seven survive, drawn in ink and pencil, on 38 fragile sheets of paper, dating between 1583 and 1614. Collectively, they provide a unique insight into early modern Scotland, with important graphic depictions of towns, castles, tower houses, abbeys, rural settlements, mountains, rivers, woodland and economic resources. The accompanying textual notes, both on the maps and those transcribed by other authors, form a complementary itinerary of places and descriptions of Scotland.

The maps were surveyed and drafted by Timothy Pont (circa. 1565-1614). Pont graduated from St Andrews in 1583, and in 1601 became minister of the parish of Dunnet in Caithness. For reasons that are still debated, Pont undertook the

most comprehensive survey of Scotland yet undertaken. That it proved to be a remarkable achievement can partly be illustrated numerically: the best map of Scotland before Pont's time, Paulo Forlani's *Scotia* of the 1560s, recorded just 105 place names. Pont's maps collectively record over 9,500 names, and are the earliest to include numerous other features.

The maps weren't published until some forty years after Pont's death. They came to form the background content to the first published atlas of Scotland, Joan Blaeu's *Atlas Novus* (1654). Blaeu's atlas contained 49 maps and 20,000 place names, the vast majority of which appeared on a map for the first time. Blaeu's magnificent publication grew to become a 12-volume atlas of the known world and was the most expensive book money could buy in the 17th century. However, it was Pont's

work that literally put Scotland on the map, and made Blaeu's publication possible.

Chris Fleet,
Senior Map Curator

Find out more about the Pont manuscript maps at <http://maps.nls.uk/pont>



Map of the Firth of Tay



The Darien papers (1695–1707)

Priceless documents that record a key moment in Scottish economic history



Scene at the departure from Leith of the Darien Expedition

A record of a remarkable episode in Scotland's history, which still reverberates in economic and political debate today, the Darien papers are documents of the 'Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies'. The grand name of this organisation gives a clue about the ambitious nature of this project. The company was set up in 1695 and its first project was to establish a trading colony in Darien in Central America. This was to be the beginning of a Scottish empire, which it was hoped would grow to equal those of Scotland's rivals, and in particular, England.

This was a very bold move, and one that inspired an unprecedented patriotic response. Subscriptions came in from across Scotland and from all sectors of

society: the aristocracy, trades people, farmers, professionals and the burghs. It took just a year to build up a venture fund of £400,000, and this money was used to build and equip five ships, which set off from Leith in July 1698 with the first thousand settlers.

The voyage met with disaster. The colony at Darien (the narrowest piece of land in the world, located in eastern Panama) found it difficult to support itself and was beset by disease in the hot and unfamiliar climate. The English colonists in America were instructed not to help, and after a year, the settlers deserted Darien. A second expedition, unaware of the failure of the first, set off in August 1699 and was attacked by the Spanish, resulting in Darien being abandoned once more in April 1700. Only three out of 13 ships ever returned to Scotland, representing a catastrophic loss of lives and money.

The failure of the venture was a huge blow to Scotland's economy, and to its confidence. It gave fuel to those promoting a union in England, and undoubtedly contributed to the union of the Scottish and English parliaments which took place in 1707.

Robin Smith, Manuscript and Map Collections Manager

You can view some of the papers of the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa & the Indies 1695–1707 at www.archive.org/details/darienpapersbein00bann. The Royal Bank of Scotland also owns part of the archive, and the nomination of this collection to UNESCO's UK Memory of the World Register was made jointly by NLS and RBS

The Chepman and Myllar Prints (1508)

Volume may be the greatest printed treasure in the Library's collections

The 'Chepman and Myllar Prints' is the name given to a collection, bound in a single volume, of 11 separately printed small books. The collection includes the three earliest surviving dated books printed by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar on Scotland's first printing press, located in the Cowgate, Edinburgh, on 4, 8 and 20 April 1508.

The 4 April book is John Lydgate's work of English literature, *The Complaint of the Black Knight*.

The others are predominantly works of Scottish literature, including poems by William Dunbar and Robert Henryson. To quote Sally Mapstone, from her introduction to the DVD facsimile edition (with transcriptions) of the whole of 'The Chepman and Myllar Prints' (Scottish Text Society in association with NLS, 2008), these books 'mark the point at which literature, national awareness and enterprise come together in Scotland in an utterly new form'.

In Edinburgh's Old Town, a plaque, unveiled on 4 April 2008, highlights the location of the printing press.

Brian Hillyard, Rare Book Collections Manager

You can read facsimiles (with transcriptions) of the 'Chepman and Myllar Prints' at <http://digital.nls.uk/firstscottishbooks>. The DVD mentioned above can be purchased at the NLS Visitor Centre



Andrew Myllar's windmill logo

Author Sara Sheridan at the Library



Treasure hunting at the Library

Sara Sheridan, the Edinburgh-based writer, on how she found the subject of her latest historical novel in the John Murray Archive



Occasionally I find myself moved to tears by the letters of long-dead adventurers

As a kid there were only a couple of places I was allowed to go out alone, and one of them was the local library. This made my early associations with reading rooms extremely positive – the library came to be a symbol of freedom. Initially, as everyone does, I read books, borrowing endless volumes of my favourites. Over the years though, I've moved on to appreciating archive material, the original source documents of our history. I've spent time in hundreds of institutional collections – I am, if nothing else, a major swot!

To me, reading through old letters and journals is like treasure-hunting. Somewhere in those faded, hand-written lines, there is a story that has been packed away in a dusty old box for years. It often shocks me, taking letters from their bindings, that I might be the first person to read the words in a very long time. As a novelist, that's fascinating; individual documents are like signposted roads, heading to a variety of

intriguing possibilities. Everyone wants to read about the rich and famous from history, but archives contain all that's left of historical figures who might not be well-known, but are fascinating nonetheless. Occasionally I find myself moved to tears by the letters of long-dead adventurers, or by the ships' manifests and crew rolls of heroes long gone.

When the John Murray Archive came to the NLS, it was Christmas come early for me. The Senior Curator, David McClay, showed me three letters, at the time uncatalogued, from a young, Arabian adventurer, a lieutenant in the Bombay Marine. He'd been a Murray author, a member of the Royal Society and he'd given evidence in Parliament in the 1830s about affairs on the Arabian Peninsula and yet, there was very little left of him – just a short entry in the *National Dictionary of Biography*, a four-line *Times* obituary, these letters and the two books he'd written. For a novelist, the gaps in a story are as intriguing as the material that still exists. That was it – I had to write the book.

Sara's book, *Secret of the Sands*, is published by HarperCollins on 5 February 2011 and is available for pre-order at www.amazon.co.uk

American author **Washington Irving** is one of the many hundreds of thousands of people represented in the Library's collections



NLS holds some Washington Irving manuscripts and archives

Washington Irving (1783-1859) is best known today for his short stories *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. The success of these works led to him being called the 'father of the American short story.' However, he also produced a wide range of popular writing, including works of history, travel and satire, inspired by his extended travels in Britain, Spain and America.

Thanks to his English publisher John Murray II, Irving was one of the first American writers to become popular on both sides of the Atlantic. This success led the author to declare that Murray's 'fair, open, and liberal spirit' had made him the 'Prince of Booksellers.'

Irving's texts were often presented as having been written by someone else, including such amusing pseudonyms as Geoffrey Crayon and Will Wizard. Irving's *History of New York* claims to be the work of one Diedrich Knickerbocker, a surname based on the early Dutch settlers of New York. Knickerbocker became a popular nickname for New Yorkers. It was also incorporated into the title of a popular ice cream sundae (the Knickerbocker Glory) and adopted by the basketball team the New York Knickerbockers.



Washington Irving features in the free John Murray Archive exhibition at the National Library of Scotland's George IV Bridge building

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