Michael Nix

The Dieterichs Collection comprises more than 100,000 items – by far the largest special collection in the National Library of Scotland. Alastair Cherry drily commented in the Encouragement of Learning, ‘The purchase price of £86, cheap even by the standards of 1820, was a reflection of the modest value placed upon it at the time, an opinion which posterity has found no reason to dispute.’ However, the narrative of its import from Leipzig is far from dull. The story emerges both from documents held at the National Archives of Scotland, where Michael Nix found the original bill of lading for the import of Dieterichs’ vast library, and from correspondence in Faculty of Advocates’ records, that brings to light both the daunting logistics and some of the personalities involved in the operation.

An Uncommonly Heavy Collection

Tons of Tomes

For the fashionable, the ending of the prolonged conflict with France in June 1815 reopened the Continent to the peregrinations of wealthy British travellers. In the port town of Leith, tourism became a new business opportunity for ship owners trading in highly competitive post-war conditions. Early in the following year, advertisements in the Edinburgh press announced the creation of the Leith and Hamburg Shipping Company to form a regular trading link between the two ports. On 8 March 1816 the Edinburgh Evening Courant noted that six fast, cutter-rigged sailing smacks with ‘handsome accommodation for passengers’ and ‘moderate freights’ were nearing completion. Four months later, on 22 July, promoting the latest addition to their fleet, the directors enthused over the 142-ton, Newcastle-built sailing smack

David’s Library

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William Davidson’s engraving of Leith from Richard Ayton’s Voyage Round the Coast of Britain, 8 volumes, 1814 (MS.E.46) shows the port much as it was when the Dieterichs Collection was shipped there.
years after Hirsch’s visit, an unknown party offered Dieterichs £680 (around £237,000 at today’s prices) for the library, a sum he declined (FR 337: 27 October 1819). The 1816 catalogue Preface shows Gleditsch as one of five agents dealing in the purchase of books. David Laing of about 1,500 bookseller was finally severed in February 1824, presumably through Gleditsch’s insolvency. It was not without irony that, after all the effort that went into transporting it to the Advocates’ Library in Edinburgh, the collection then apparently lay in a damp cellar for some years, as mentioned by E. Edwards in Memoirs of Libraries: Including the Handbook of Library Economy, London, 1859 (K. 22 b).

Two years after Hamilton visited Leipzig, on 3 September 1819, Richter of Gleditsch’s wrote to him promising to procure for you the Dietrichs Collection. The document (modified) reads:

The delays were almost certainly a consequence of duty being levied and provided associated correspondence, in particular Board of Customs Letterbooks and part of the National Archives of Scotland, in particular FR 337. The National Library has an unaccompanied photocopy of the title page and Preface to Sectio Quarta Bibliothecae Dieterichianae cum Catalogo Librorum (Regensburg, 1816). Michael Nix has also searched through records held at the National Archives of Scotland, in particular Board of Customs Letterbooks for the period, which enumerate import duties levied and provided associated correspondence.

Note on sources

Published in 1869, Memoir of Sir William Hamilton Edinburgh 1869. by John Veitch

The essays in For the Encouragement of Learning: Scotland’s National Library 1751-1851, edited by Patrick Cadell and Ann Matheson provide a range of authoritative perspectives on the history and development of the National Library of Scotland and its collections. Alex Cain’s ‘Foreign Books in the 18th-century Advocates’ Library’ sets the context of the Dieterichs’ acquisition in terms of foreign language acquisitions and ‘Special Collections’ by Alastair Cherry provides a brief note on the Dieterichs Collection. The Records of the Faculty of Advocates provide financial details of its purchase and associated correspondence, in particular FR 337. The National Library has an unaccompanied photocopy of the title page and Preface to Sectio Quarta Bibliothecae Dieterichianae cum Catalogo Librorum (Regensburg, 1816). Michael Nix has also searched through records held at the National Archives of Scotland, in particular Board of Customs Letterbooks for the period, which enumerate import duties levied and provided associated correspondence.

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A Tantalising Tale
Discovering Sorley MacLean’s Dàin do Eimhir

Christopher Whyte

Christopher Whyte’s new edition of Sorley MacLean’s Dàin do Eimhir (Poems to Eimhir) breaks new ground in our understanding of the work of the great Gaelic poet, whose achievements have been honoured with many major awards, including the Queen’s Medal for Poetry. The Sorley MacLean Papers at the National Library of Scotland, which are currently being catalogued, have already made it possible to identify most of the sequences omitted from previous editions of Dàin do Eimhir. They will doubtless afford future researchers many further insights. Christopher Whyte here describes the challenge posed by this complex literary puzzle.

Edinburgh Festival, I was lucky enough to have the poet’s undivided attention for a couple of hours one evening. I was busy putting as much of the sequence as was available to me into Italian, for prospective publication. What I was hoping for was illumination on several points of grammar and expression which I knew to puzzle me. And instead MacLean was eager to give me his own version of the story behind the sequence, one he never committed to print, but which I soon realised I was not the only person to have heard. It was to a certain extent a comical encounter, for his reminiscences kept us away from what I looked on as the real business of the meeting, and I did not bother to make notes on what he told me. Different people were in possession of differing versions of the story, which they eeked out with their own decoding of the published texts. When, on the prompting of Ronald Renton, the Association for Scottish Literary Studies approached me about doing an edition of the sequence, in the spring of 1999, I realised that I would have to tread a delicate line in the spring of 1999, I realised that I would have to tread a delicate line in not attempting to restrict me in any way. The only exception was a scurrilous epigram on the Pope who celebrated the fall of Barcelona in 1939, a manuscript version of the cycle.

The epigram was brought to my attention by a friend and colleague, Dr Michel Byrne, editor of the Collected Poems (H2 201 1632) of MacLean’s contemporary George Campbell Hay (1915–84). Hay had transcribed it, along with others, in his Eimhir sequence, into a notebook which forms part of his archive in the National Library of Scotland. One of these was the missing poem XVI, the longest of six unpublished poems now restored to the cycle, and a significant addition to the overall canon of MacLean’s work. My major resource, however, in working on the sequence was constituted by the letters MacLean wrote between 1940 and 1943 to Douglas Young, poet, classical scholar and leading light of the nationalist movement at the outbreak of the war. These are also held in the National Library, and I had consulted them around the time I saw MacLean himself. The letters contain typecript copies, with English translations, of two short items from the sequence, neither a major poem, but nonetheless interesting and valuable in their own light. One of them, XLI, as I would later learn, had functioned as closure to an intermediate version of the cycle.

From this correspondence I also learned about the letter MacLean had received on Tuesday 19 December 1939, when XXVII was finished and XXVIII had yet to be written. It implied that he would never be able to enjoy a full relationship with the woman he loved and whose beauty he had already celebrated in lyrics of such outstanding quality that the time hallowed boast of conferring immortality on the beloved was, in this case at least, far from empty waggery.

Three more of the missing items had appeared in Calum Macdonald’s Lines Renew (NH 299) in 1970, disturbing in the graphic intensity with which they describe the mutilation MacLean believed the woman to have suffered. But when at last, after fifty years, he was able to publish a second collection with Canongate in 1977, the ‘Dàin do Eimhir’ disappeared from public view. Those items he chose to reprint carried individual titles, with no indication that they had once belonged to a larger entity. When a collected volume was issued by Carcanet in 1989, Roman numerals, added almost surreptitiously at the end of poems, indicated their position in the sequence as originally conceived. But it would have taken a very patient reader to piece these together in order to gain a valid impression of the sequence as it once existed.

I only learned this spring that Douglas Young had deposited certain manuscript copies of the Eimhir poems,
entrusted to him by MacLean before he departed on active service, in Aberdeen University Library. Had I known this previously, it would have made my task considerably easier. Nonetheless, it proved possible to recover all but one of the missing items from the National Library's holdings, thanks in part to a series of hypotheses and deductions which enriched my understanding of the sequence and of MacLean's contradictory, often vacillating attitude towards it. In the spring of 2001, the wakeful hours between three and five in the morning were frequently taken up with conjectures about the fate and content of one or another of the missing items, and how their restoration might affect the cycle as a whole.

Let me give two examples. An item which appears as XVI among the ‘Dàin Eile’ in the 1943 edition compares MacLean’s two great loves of this period, an Irish woman from MacLean’s ‘Exchange’) he was to apologise retrospectively to the Irish woman, for the Scottish woman, in order to ensure a proper among the ‘Dàin Eile’ ‘as in the past’. By a process of elimination, I worked out that ‘Dàin Eile’ XVI must originally have been ‘Dàin do Eimhir’ VI. But that brought the German ‘chorus’ into the cycle at far too early a stage! In poem XXII, MacLean was still preoccupied with the Irish woman, whom he had met at the time of the Spanish Civil War, and who was to marry the Usher Hall, with Adrian Boult conducting, on 9 December 1939, the day before MacLean began work on the poem. Two native speakers whom I consulted gave contradictory answers. For one, ‘còisir’ obviously meant ‘chorus’, while for the other it could only mean ‘orchestra’. In a 1941 translation written in pencil by the poet, and preserved among the Card Papers (Acc 10193), the National Library of Scotland, the word is rendered ‘orchestra’ the first time it appears. The second time, the translation has been deleted so energetically as to make a hole in the paper, and ‘my love in the great orchestra’.

MacLean’s letters to Young offer an engaging compendium of the poet’s views on literature, culture and politics around the time the sequence was completed. As with all correspondences, there is effectively a dual authorship. Hardly any of Young’s letters are included in the archive. Yet in so far as these were letters written to him, and so are excerpts from a dialogue between the two men, Young bears a large responsibility for their existence. As I probed over them, noting down everything that could be relevant to the edition, I became more and more aware of a debt of gratitude to Young: for his intellectual conviction, I don’t know what worries me far more than his misgivings. Example of John MacLean – but is the case? I believe he would have taken your line in effect and that fills me with the same! If I would have the courage to take your line, or Hay’s, but my attitude to the Nazis is crudely what I imagine Mussi’s, that they are just the very devil. You have Greene on your side but I cannot lean much on his political judgement. What worries me far more than his misgivings is the example of John MacLean – but is the case? I believe he would have taken your line in effect and that fills me with the same! (1 October 1940)

Young received a prison sentence for his determined opposition to a London government’s imposing military conscription north of the border. MacLean, on the other hand, doggedly placed his hopes in Stalinist Russia and an eventual victory of the Red Army. What we now know of conditions in Russia in the 1930s, and of the fate of those countries which were indeed ‘liberated’ by the Red Army at the end of the war, casts a shadow over the whole poem in an ironic light. But he lacked the benefit of his hunches, and his views were shared by many left-wing intellectuals less isolated geographically, who had the benefit of greater access to relevant accounts and information. André Gide was one of very few contemporary figures prepared to look honestly at what had become of the Bolshevik dream.

The realisation that he had been duped by the Scottish woman, and the peculiar circumstances which surrounded her deception, were perhaps the major factor in the antipathy which MacLean increasingly felt for the sequence. He came to look on the prospect of its publication with indifference and even hostility. The same cannot be said for the extended political poem which occupied him in the spring of 1939, and again at the end of the year, and which took its title from the beloved mountain range in Skye on whose peaks he had so often roamed alone, when appointed to his first teaching post at Portree High School. While making full reference in the edition of the ‘Dàin do Eimhir’ to the text of ‘An Cùilithionn’ as published in Chapman magazine and then in the 1989 collected volume, I was also able to consult the original, 1939 version of the poem in the poet’s archive, which the National Library of Scotland is in the process of cataloguing. The early version is about a third as long again and contains some 400 lines of unpublished poetry. Comparison of the two versions lends a fresh perspective on both his attitudes at the outbreak of the war, as well as on the cutting and pasting which he undertook so as to come up with an ‘acceptable’ abridgement half a century later.

Perhaps the next step in making MacLean’s poetic achievement fully available to a broad public will be to collate both texts with the related materials lodged in the university libraries of Aberdeen and Edinburgh, offering a structured presentation which will make a valid assessment of this major poem feasible at last.

Note on sources

The Sorley MacLean Papers (MS.29501) are currently being catalogued: the records will be accessible via the Library’s online catalogue. The collection comprises extensive correspondence, 1934–90, diaries and notebooks, ms of poetry and prose, including unpublished material, and a substantial archive of clippings and printed materials, including texts of unpublished lectures. The collection also includes the papers of four of Sorley MacLean’s relatives: Alexander Nicolson (boxes 33 and 34) and James Nicolson (box 35), both of whom collected songs from Skye and Raasay; folklorist and author, Calum Lain Maclean (boxes 36 and 37); and Jock Nicolson (box 39), who collected songs and poems, translations and correspondence of John MacLean (box 38). Printed items include press cuttings and photographs. In 1981 the Library mounted an exhibition to mark the author’s seventieth birthday and the catalogue, Sorleibh MacGill-Eain – Sorley MacLean, edited by Anne Mattison, bears the shelf mark Lit.S.37.M. An Taul (HP2.200.03475), an anthology of twentith-century Gaelic verse (Potion, 1999) edited by Ronald Black, contains extensive notes on the author’s background and writing. The Library has all of Sorley MacLean’s published works, including the 1943 first edition of Dàin do Eimhir (HP4.84.1691) and the latest, Dàin do Eimhir (Association of Scottish Literary Studies, 2002) (H3.202.3779) edited by Christopher Whyte, who provides a full account of the genesis of this new edition as well as bibliographical references.
One of the pleasures of researching my book *Printing Type Design: A New History from Gutenberg to 2000* (HP3.201.0720) was looking at some very fine and historically important books. As I read the final proofs of this narrative, the National Library of Scotland put on display a copy of a very fine illustrated folio edition of the King James Bible, published in 1999 in two volumes by the private Pennsylvania Caxton Press of Barry Moser and Bruce Kovner (FB 1.281). Seeing this important very late-twentieth-century American example of a private press tradition that began with the English Doves Press Bible of 1903 (L.178) tempted me to add some sentences to my supposedly completed book. The typeface used by Barry Moser is Matthew Carter’s excellent Galliard. Interestingly, and quite unknown to me, the National Library had just adopted Galliard for use on correspondence and publications, including Folio. Carter’s lower case italic ґ is a very distinctive design.

Carter’s Galliard was first issued by the Merckentypeography Company of New York in 1978 as a photo-composition face. Carter based Galliard on a sixteenth-century typeface by Robert Granjon who was working in Paris from the middle 1540s. Now digitised, Galliard is a continuation of a style of roman typefaces – the so-called ‘Old Faces’ – that go back in an unbroken line to Paris in the 1560s when Claude Garamond cut better italic typefaces that Granjon. No man has later type designers learned from, Garamond but also italic types that all.

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The Biographer’s Tale

Beauties and Barrel Vaults

John Knox is a controversial figure regarded by some as little short of heroic and vilified by others as a ranting misogynist. In John Knox – Democrat, Roderick Graham offers a fresh perspective, emphasising the contribution Knox made to the Scottish system of education, and declaring him to be ‘the man who handed the torch of democracy to the citizens of today’. His vivid description of Knox and his milieu was the fruit of several years’ research, during which time the National Library of Scotland became his second home. In this article, he offers a personal and delightfully humorous impression of working in the Library and highlights the role of staff in facilitating readers’ quests. The accompanying illustrations pick up on his mention of the fascinating small displays mounted in the Barrel Vaults.

Roderick Graham

As well as sources of information on printing and type design such as the Florins and the ontology, the Library has copies of other less visually interesting journals that are nonetheless important to any researcher into printing types. The Woodcuts also add interest to the Library's collection of the National Library of Scotland, illuminates and contextualises Scotland’s contribution as well as providing a sweeping overview of the subject. The Library has an extensive collection of papers and letters by Duncan Grant featuring aspects of his life as a writer, editor, publisher, including many of his early or emerging verses, poems, essays and lectures and correspondences and other pieces on state of the art technology that until recently belonged to the realms of science fiction, their interpretation was being undertaken by scholars from New World, and all this was taking place in the context of a library founded by Scottish advocates in the seventeenth century. Observing such activity is only one of the fascinations the National Library of Scotland, indeed, the Library’s contribution to the Scottish system of education, and declaring him to be ‘the man who handed the torch of democracy to the citizens of today’. His vivid description of Knox and his milieu was the fruit of several years’ research, during which time the National Library of Scotland became his second home. In this article, he offers a personal and delightfully humorous impression of working in the Library and highlights the role of staff in facilitating readers’ quests. The accompanying illustrations pick up on his mention of the fascinating small displays mounted in the Barrel Vaults.

Roderick Graham

having spent much of my life as a television director, I am always acutely aware of the visual moments which encapsulate a whole story. A few years ago, I had just such an experience while I was working in the North Reading Room of the National Library of Scotland. Diagonally opposite me was a young woman, twenty-something, freshly newly minted librarian, her accent was as unmistakably Californian as Napa Valley Chardonnay. She was working on a number of illuminated parchment documents, skillfully transferring their contents to her laptop. Her fingers fluttered almost silently over the keyboard, as opposed to the rattle of masonry which announces the more aged readers’ pen and steel. The state of the art quill long before her country’s foundation were being encoded using state of the art technology that until recently belonged to the realms of science fiction, their interpretation was being undertaken by scholars from New World, and all this was taking place in the context of a library founded by Scottish advocates in the seventeenth century. Observing such activity is only one of the fascinations the National Library of Scotland, indeed, the Library’s contribution to the Scottish system of education, and declaring him to be ‘the man who handed the torch of democracy to the citizens of today’. His vivid description of Knox and his milieu was the fruit of several years’ research, during which time the National Library of Scotland became his second home. In this article, he offers a personal and delightfully humorous impression of working in the Library and highlights the role of staff in facilitating readers’ quests. The accompanying illustrations pick up on his mention of the fascinating small displays mounted in the Barrel Vaults.

Roderick Graham

The American Declaration of Independence by John Dunlap of Philadelphia was in a Caslon typeface imported from London, and we know it to have been one of John Baine’s types. It needs no saying by me that the Library has copies of several of the printed manuscripts of the early printers. Amongst the earliest examples of Scottish printing to have survived are a group of nine verse formulas or pamphlets printed by Chepman and Myllar c. 1508. The Library also has a copy of the very interesting ‘De Tempore Romano’ (Sa.3), Edinburgh, Walter Chepman, 2 vols., 1509–10, which is a highly significant black letter achievement by Scotland’s earliest printers. Androw Myllar learned the craft of printing in Rouen, and his Scottish-Trench tradition was continued by Thomas Bassandwe who set to work in Paris and Leyden before he established his press in Edinburgh. The Bassandwee Bible of 1579 (Carnegie Library 1633) is not only the first Bible to be printed in Scotland but also the first in English to be printed in roman type. These early links between Scotland and the rest of Europe are discernible on the electronic horizon. It seems, however, that the design of the lettering in these printed books will continue the tradition that has its roots in Renaissance manuscripts.

Printing Type Designs had its beginning in an essay I wrote – the nineteenth-century ‘modern’ typefaces produced by Miller & Richard, Edinburgh typefounders, which became known in America as ‘Scotch’. M. & R., as they were known in the printing trade, were a large and internationally recognised firm with branches in New York and other cities as well as to many large London houses. In 1914 this influential foundry had about 500 employees. The company closed in 1952 where there were fewer than twenty-five working for the company. M. & R.’s Old Style typeface of 1858 seems to have been widely used across Europe, the United States and the USA.

William Miller, who founded his infant concern in 1788, and his son, James, later served an apprenticeship with the renowned Alexander Wilson’s foundry. Access to type specimens issued by Wilson and by Miller & Richard was important to my work. So also were those issued by Stephenson, Blake, an important Sheffield foundry. Some of Wilson’s specimen books are expensive productions and the best of William Caslon’s broadsheet specimens are considered rare. Other very commercial nineteenth-century foundries issued interesting specimens for the display types through which their names live on – Figgins, Thorne and Thoroughgood. Specimen issued by Vincent Figgins to show his ‘fat’ display type serif can be seen in the Library which has been reproduced in a book edited by Berthold Wolpe (NG 1187.c.10) whose classic

The History of Baine, a neglected typefounder who was set in typefaces made by John Baine, was printed in a tall quarto edition in 1896, and it was accepted that the first printing of Breviarium Romanum in Venice, 1478 (Inc.118): the Library has the only known copy of this manuscript is that it derives from a version of the text written by Poggio Braschiino who has been credited with inventing type for any book to appear on the continent became the first of the new roman printing types. Today we live in an electronic age in which the printing of books is about to be further revolutionised thanks to the Internet and encoding to Full Portable Document Format and other systems only vaguely discernible on the electronic horizon. It seems, however, that the design of the lettering in these printed books will continue the tradition that has its roots in Renaissance manuscripts.

John Knox is a controversial figure regarded by some as little short of heroic and vilified by others as a ranting misogynist. In John Knox – Democrat, Roderick Graham offers a fresh perspective, emphasising the contribution Knox made to the Scottish system of education, and declaring him to be ‘the man who handed the torch of democracy to the citizens of today’. His vivid description of Knox and his milieu was the fruit of several years’ research, during which time the National Library of Scotland became his second home. In this article, he offers a personal and delightfully humorous impression of working in the Library and highlights the role of staff in facilitating readers’ quests. The accompanying illustrations pick up on his mention of the fascinating small displays mounted in the Barrel Vaults.
A physician’s guide-book c.1390 (Aust.1295/9), Isaac Brown, Principal Curator of Manuscripts, described this unique item for a recent display as a “rare manuscript with the Kelladonan of John Sun.” Physically it is a book of folded sheets of vellum constructed in such a way as to be suspended from a belt or girdle. It was designed for practical use (for example, in astronomical prognostications such as the phases of the sun and moon, 1587–1682, or as a manual of bloodletting techniques) over a fairly short period of time.

A Letter to a Gentleman Detecting the Gangrene of Some Errors Vested at This Time by James Hog, Minister of the Gospel at Carnock, his slim fifty pages bore the declaration: A Letter to a Gentleman Detecting the Gangrene of Some Errors Vested at This Time (2464: 11). The title page informed me it was published in 1716 and sold by John Martin, William Brown and William Dicky, booksellers in Edinburgh. Such things are read with growing excitement, since they might represent a fresh lead, or merely turn out to be a dead end. In this case, the pamphlet was relevant. It relates to a heated theological dispute between Professor John Simson and James Webster. Originally it was sold to the public as a treatise on the author’s vehemently held views, but its acquisition by the Advocates’ Library was based on it being held for time immemorial for readers and researchers. Robert Graves contended that museums hold objects to be viewed but not used, thus denaturing the objects of their virtue. Could it then be said that since libraries hold books to read, they enhance their virtue? My pamphlet might have lain dormant for nearly three hundred years, awaiting its moment of destiny with me. I am probably overly romantic, but these moments of discovery still give me a thrill. But the greatest thrill comes from actually handling original manuscripts, and an experience which I first had in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. The documents in question were James Boswell’s journals, and when I read his account of meeting Dr Johnson for the first time, I felt an emotional overload related to the eighteenth century. I have had the same feeling in the National Library of Scotland with the letters of Robert Burns. Even when I knew that I had been transcribed, footnoted and published, it is still possible that something might have been missed by previous editors. Having sentimental emotions of this sort perhaps marks me out as lacking academic objectivity, but the kick is dangerously habit-forming. Having sentimental emotions of this sort perhaps marks me out as lacking academic objectivity, but the kick is dangerously habit-forming. During my researches I have spent quite some time rummaging through old or microfilmed readers; my initial problems with these machines may have been because I suffer from what a BBC video technician once described as Bio-Mechanical Interface Malfunction. In other words, I can be relied upon to push the wrong button. Converting a line of text to the floor under the desk and lacing up the spool of film while wearing gloves, before deciding which way to turn the spool knob, can be an exhausting process. But then! A keyhole into the past is unlocked and I can read the newspapers and journals of eighteenth-century Edinburgh or London. I know I should go directly to the page my footnote clue led me to, but the pep into daily life afforded by antique newspapers is too tempting to resist. Garrick was giving a benefit on Tuesday! People were trying to ransom their stolen purses! So that’s what they thought of returning nabobs! All good detectives will spend time at the scene of the crime; for my part, I do my best to visualise the physical locale of the past as accurately as possible. In my experience, one of the staff at the M Musselburgh library cannot do enough to help and before minutes have passed, maps are spread out. Like all good librarians, they bring you what you asked for and direct you to other items you knew nothing of. Perhaps the reader’s ignorance is welcomed by the library staff, in that it provides with a challenge. On one occasion, for reasons that now seem obscure, I wanted to track down the name of a boarding kennel for dogs operating in the Home Counties in the late 1940s. The business librarian gulped hard two or three times, then proceeded to narrow down what I was looking for. As the afternoon wore on, more and more business directories were brought until I had a askful and a very short list of suspects. Then I realised that the librarian was shadowing my researches. In fact, it turned out that she had beaten me to it and had come up with the prime suspect.

Whatever I have wanted to research, and in whatever form, the librarians at the National Library of Scotland have always enthusiastically contributed. I am conscious that I am not a distinguished academic, but a tyro biographer. Access to the part of our nation’s memory lodged in the National Library of Scotland is an absolute must, and as many as possible should be able to use its resources. The Library is able to offer the modern reader the ability of enriching our common store of knowledge through facilitating dialogue across the centuries.

The Barrel Vaults

The Barrel Vaults flank the corridor immediately beyond the security point on the way into the Library’s George IV Bridge Building. Responsibility for mounting the displays is divided between the Rare Books, Collection Development and Manuscript Divisions. One case is devoted to new books, promoting awareness of the range of modern material in the Library. Themes have ranged from US Presidents, SOE/INTS, Cinema, Polar Regions, Official Publications and Classics to Fine Art, the Queen’s Jubilee and Siena. Displays of this kind are extremely useful for promoting reading. When the display was about the work of the late Sir John Murray, the late Dr Jack Murray wrote an article which appeared immediately in the national press. It also offered an opportunity for many people to read about Sir John Murray and how he got started as a publisher. In addition, the Murray display attracted a group of students who were studying the history of publishing. The Murray display was also used to promote a new book which was due to be published. The display was very successful in promoting the book, and it also provided an opportunity for the students to see the first copy of the book.

Another display was about the work of the late Dr Iain Brown. This display was very successful in promoting the book, and it also provided an opportunity for the students to see the first copy of the book. The display was also used to promote a new book which was due to be published. The display was very successful in promoting the book, and it also provided an opportunity for the students to see the first copy of the book.

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MICHAEL NIX has worked widely in education, and is currently completing a book on a coastal museum at Hartland Quay in North Devon. He is currently completing a book on the history of shipbuilding. Among other recent projects, he was the historical advisor and writer for the Greenweath Gateway Exhibition. His first book, "John Knox – Denzey", was published by Robert Hale in 2001.

CHRISTOPHER WHYTE is a poet, translator and writer. He wishes to thank the National Library of Scotland for their assistance.

DUNCAN GLEN taught typography from 1960 till 1986 and was Professor of Visual Communication in Nottingham Trent University. Dr Glen first worked in printing in 1948, in publishing in London from 1956, and since 1964 has been an independent publisher, editor, critic, historian of Scottish literature and poet. He became a Fellow of the Chartered Society of Designers and served on the Graphic Board of the Council for National Academia Awards. In 1987 he returned to Edinburgh to write, edit and publish full-time; he now lives in Fife, where he publishes a variety of works under the Akros imprint.

21 November
Amateur and Professional in Early Scottish Photography
Sara Stevenson (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

25 November
The Calotype Process and the Beginnings of Scottish Photography at St Andrews
Raddy Simpson

27 November
Civil Warrior (book launch)
Author Robin Bell talks about the extraordinary life - and the poems - of James Graham, first Marquis of Montrose (1612-50)

29 November
The National Library of Scotland/Salute Society Scottish Research Book of the Year is announced as part of the Salute Society Literary Awards.

December 2002
2 December
Photography – the Beginnings of the New Art
Richard Morris explains the calotype process.

5 December
World Light
Author and broadcaster Magnus Magnusson talks about the Nobel prize-winning author, Haldor Laxness, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth.

11 December
Balcarrs Lute Book
Musicians Matthew Spring, Sara Stowe and Ian Fraser perform music from the Balcarrs Lute Book, a rare 16th-century manuscript belonging to the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres and held in the National Library of Scotland.

The winner of the Robert Louis Stevenson Award for writers, funded by the Library of Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council, is announced.

More writers' events are planned for early 2003. Contact the Events Line (0131-622 4807) or e-mail events@nls.uk to be added to the mailing list to receive information on upcoming Library events.

If you have any comments regarding Folio, or would like to be added to the mailing list to receive it, please contact Jackie Cromarty, Deputy Head of Public Programmes, by telephone on 0131-622 4810 or via e-mail at j.cromarty@nls.uk

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In the next Folio
(Spring 2003)

LAIN GORDON BROWN, Principal Curator of Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland, discusses an important new David Hume document which he recently discovered. This is a memorandum giving instructions to the philosopher’s ‘ne’er-do-well nephew on how to behave in Paris. The document is described and analysed in the context of both of what Paris had meant to Hume himself and in that of the role ‘le bon David’ played as kindly uncle. A Hume discovery is not exactly an everyday occurrence, and Dr Brown tells a tale both scholarly and appealing.

COLIN MCLEAN is a curator in the Manuscripts Division, with particular responsibility for twelfth-century military history, especially the First World War. He was closely involved in researching and identifying images for the Library’s Experiences of War website, www.nls.uk/ExperiencesofWar. He discusses insights given into pre-war relations between Britain and Germany gleaned from some less well-known items within the Manuscripts collections, including a magnificent photograph album gifted by Kaiser Wilhelm II to R.B. Haldane, the British War Secretary, and the notes he made in preparation for a newspaper interview in the late 1920s.

STEPHEN BROWN of Trent University, Canada has since 1994 been a frequent visitor to Scotland to study the eighteenth-century Edinburgh book trade, especially the careers of the printers William Auld, James Tytler, and William Smellie, whose extensive manuscript papers he edited and annotated for the Society of Antiquaries.

If you have any comments regarding Folio, or would like to be added to the mailing list to receive it, please contact Jackie Cromarty, Deputy Head of Public Programmes, by telephone on 0131-622 4810 or via e-mail at j.cromarty@nls.uk

In the next Folio he will tell the story of Edinburgh printing during the Enlightenment by describing some of the remarkable items he examined at the Library, including a rare copy of Burns’ Merry Muses, a bewildering London imprint of the first edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and a political review which led to one of the first arrests in Scotland for seditious writing in the 1790s.