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DAVID HUME
A True Parisian

GENERATING IDEAS
Product of Print

ENTWINED DESTINIES
The Fortunes of War

SMEDDUM & SENSIBILITY
Oliphant's Tale



Printing for the People

Two Great Enlightenment Printers

By one famous account, it was possible in late-eighteenth-century Edinburgh to stand beside the Mercat Cross and ‘in a few minutes, take fifty men of genius and learning by the hand’. The capital had developed into an intellectual haven of extraordinary distinction by the 1780s, becoming home to two international learned societies established under royal charters, numerous debating clubs, several specialist journals, and world renowned authorities in the fields of medicine, philosophy, history, and the emerging new social and natural sciences. Coming and going on any given day in the town centre were such men as William Cullen, David Hume, William Robertson, Adam Smith and James Hutton. But the pursuit of learning went far beyond Edinburgh’s professional classes, enlisting in its cause a socially broad-based laity, who supported the town’s numerous book shops, as many as a dozen newspapers at various times, and a score of magazines and reviews. Those fifty men of genius and learning might have conversed at the Mercat Cross with tradesmen and merchants who were equally engaged in projects of self-improvement and as curious about the natural world as any eighteenth-century philosopher.

The democratisation of learning was a defining feature of Edinburgh’s Enlightenment. Under the leadership of moderate clergymen like Principal William Robertson, the University had established curricula that attracted students from England, the Continent and North America, and Scotland was well served by its parish schools in offering a sound basic education to the general population. Freemasonry, in its resolutely Scottish manifestation, also contributed significantly to the promotion of learning for the sake of moral good as well as intellectual self-improvement. The Scottish mason – unlike his brethren in England or the Continent – avoided mystical and political preoccupations, remaining true to a common sense tradition that encouraged him, according to *The Freemason’s Pocket-Companion* (1765) (XX.7/3), ‘to be a lover of the arts and sciences, and to take all opportunities of improving himself therein’. Edinburgh’s masonic lodges typically invited lectures

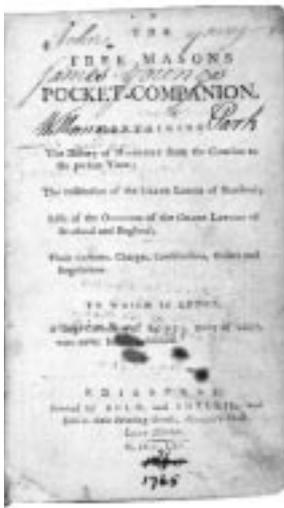
STEPHEN BROWN

The city of Edinburgh was at the heart of the Scottish Enlightenment, a period of intellectual ferment in the arts and sciences. Stephen Brown has spent many years researching the printers, publishers and booksellers who promoted the work of the leading thinkers of the time. Two of these, William Smellie and James Tytler, emerge as fascinating characters, both passionately committed to the dissemination of ideas and the democratisation of learning.

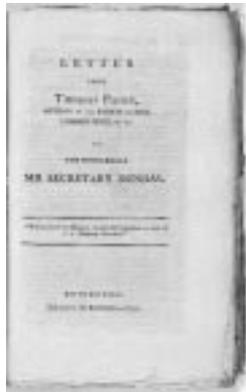
on contemporary issues in moral philosophy and natural science, and these lectures were occasionally published. In the late-eighteenth century, many of Edinburgh’s intellectual élite were not only practising freemasons but also lodge masters and even Grand Masters of Scotland, including David Dalrymple, Henry Erskine, Lord Monboddo, James Boswell, and Dugald Stewart. The culture of learning and improvement within the egalitarian community that characterised eighteenth-century Edinburgh’s masonic lodges provided a ready example of how public education might bring about social change, something very much acknowledged by one Scottish Grand Master, Lord Buchan, in the principles he followed in the establishment of his Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

If learned societies, university classrooms, clubs and lodges provided venues for the oral transmission of enlightened arts and sciences, the wider dissemination of new ideas in print brought about an unprecedented expansion in the Edinburgh book trade. In the 1750s, there were only a few viable printing and publishing businesses operating in Edinburgh, the firm of Hamilton, Balfour and Neill most prominent among them and already

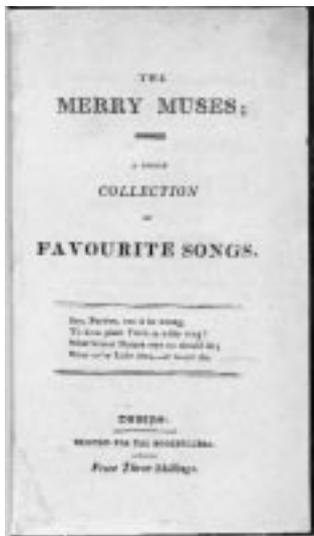
establishing new standards through its ambitious list of learned titles and its ventures into magazine and newspaper publication with the first *Edinburgh Review* (1755–56) (Nha.O214/1) and the *Edinburgh Chronicle* (1759–60) (RB.m.432). But the number of printer-publishers would increase to as many as twenty by the 1780s. During that period of some thirty years, Edinburgh booksellers like John Balfour, Charles Elliot and William Creech had come to dominate the trade through business alliances with such ex-pat Scots in London as Andrew Millar, John Murray and the Strahans, as well as partnerships on the Continent and in North America, making Edinburgh’s book business genuinely international. Such trade, of course, was a two-way commerce in ideas, bringing a wide range of foreign authors into Edinburgh book shops. Advertisements in the town’s three principal newspapers regularly announced the arrival of new titles from London, Paris and Amsterdam. Books carried Edinburgh’s Enlightenment across the globe and in turn brought controversial ideas and scientific innovations back into the town’s intellectual communities, from Tissot and D’Alembert, to John Bartram and Thomas Paine. But some of the publications which did the most to excite and sustain an appetite for new ideas among Edinburgh’s common readers came from the initiatives of local printers, focused primarily on a local market. Two of the Scottish Enlightenment’s eventual bestsellers, Dr William Buchan’s *Domestic Medicine* (1769) (BCL.D2945) and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1768–71) (EB.1) began life in such modest circumstances, conceived to make specialist knowledge accessible to the general reader and delivered cheaply to an audience based mostly in Edinburgh. Many other works similarly designed to spread learning in affordable editions offer themselves as equally interesting examples of publishing history, even though they never attained the popularity and eventual acclaim of Buchan’s medical handbook and the *Britannica*. These included scientific tracts, reviews and magazines, and books of general knowledge and the short-lived periodicals the *Gentleman and Lady’s Weekly Magazine* (1774–75) (BCL.D1992), the *Weekly Mirror* (1780–81), the *Weekly*



The Freemason's Pocket-Companion, 1765, invoked the reader 'to be a lover of the arts and sciences, and to take all opportunities of improving himself therein'. Eighteenth-century Scottish masonic lodges often invited leading thinkers to talk on contemporary issues in moral philosophy and the natural sciences.



Partly as a promotional device, radical printer James Tytler enclosed a free copy of Thomas Paine's Letter to the Right Honourable Mr Secretary Dundas with the Historical Register for May 1792. The Library has a copy in its original blue wrappers, bound together with Paine's pamphlet.

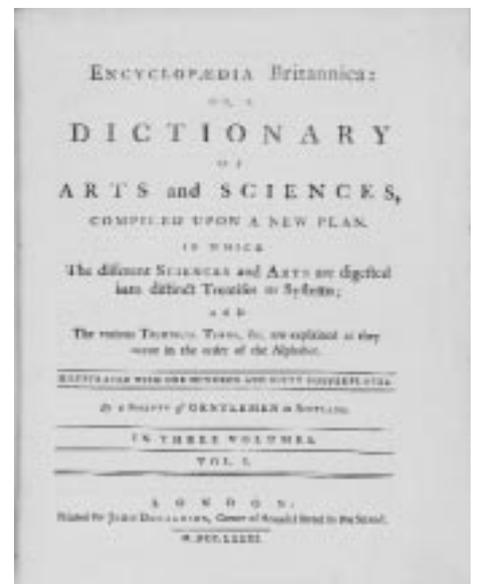


The Merry Muses of Caledonia by Robert Burns, Dublin, 1804. The Merry Muses was first printed in 1799 after William Smellie's death, by his son Alexander.

Review (1780), and the *Historical Register* (1791–92) (APS.2.89.93), all speculative ventures on the part of Edinburgh printers, written by local authors for local consumption. Edinburgh's book trade in the eighteenth century was a dynamic partner to the town's intellectual achievements, and the story of its printers is fundamental to understanding that cultural moment.

Perhaps the two most unusual Edinburgh printers in the late-eighteenth century were William Smellie (1740–95) and James Tytler (1745–1804). Their careers overlap in curious ways, although no surviving account of their lives indicates that they ever met. Both were hired by Colin Macfarquhar to compile, edit and write original articles for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Smellie for the first edition and Tytler, the second. Both were well known in Edinburgh for eclectic learning and a detailed knowledge of contemporary medicine. Both were journalists; between them, Smellie and Tytler edited and contributed to sixteen periodicals, founding or owning seven of those publications. Each discovered himself at a crucial moment in his career on the wrong political side in one of Edinburgh's many pamphlet wars, Smellie losing his chance at Edinburgh University's Chair in Natural History because of his satirical attack on the Dundas dynasty and Tytler being declared an outlaw for his failure to appear on charges of seditious libel arising from his own confrontation with the Dundases. These men also represent two professional extremes that define the high and low end of the eighteenth-century Edinburgh book trade. Smellie became Scotland's most celebrated learned printer, his services sought out by Edinburgh's and London's leading publishers; Tytler operated out of the town's suburbs employing a home-made press and using his sons as apprentices in a business that offered Edinburgh's literate poor cheap works of history, geography and theology. From vastly differing professional perspectives, Smellie and Tytler engaged with equal passion in the business of widely disseminating the new learning through using the popular press to reach a socially diverse readership.

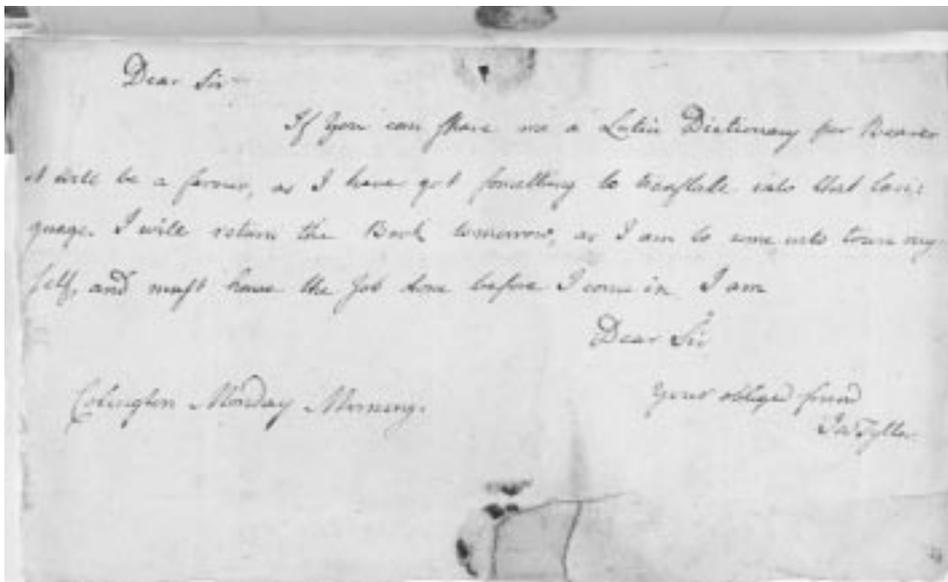
William Smellie was never a passive partner when printing for any bookseller. He believed that the printer had a responsibility for the content as well as the format of a text, and he placed a high premium on accessibility. While Smellie's editorial advice was regularly sought out by many authors including Lord Kames,



Encyclopaedia Britannica, London, 1773 (EB.3). William Smellie and James Tytler both contributed articles for the *Encyclopaedia*.

Andrew Duncan and Robert Burns, he also often found himself at odds with publishing partners who resented a printer who could be so proprietary. When Smellie did lock horns with publishers, he was quick to take the debate to the public through the newspapers. It might strike us as odd that an editorial disagreement over a learned publication would end up on the front page of the evening paper, but this was not unusual in the eighteenth century when so many editors were also journalists and so many booksellers, publishers, and printers owned or shared an interest in newspapers, reviews and magazines. In fact, for book historians, the contemporary periodical press remains a crucial – and sometimes the only – source of information about eighteenth-century Edinburgh's book trade, with its advertisements, reviews, excerpts and announcements. Smellie began his career as the editor of the *Scots Magazine* (1759–65), next becoming joint owner of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* (GIVB.2/54(7)) with William Auld, and later a co-owner, editor, and major contributor to the *Edinburgh Magazine and Review* (1773–76) (RB.s.1535). He printed the two latter periodicals and from 1773 was the printer and occasionally the editor of the *Medical and Philosophical Commentaries*. But it was as editor of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and editor, printer, and publisher of the first Edinburgh edition of Dr William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1769) (BCL.D2945) that Smellie first and most forcefully put into practice his beliefs about the proper dissemination of learning.

Smellie seems to have been at odds



Letter from James Tytler to John Anderson.
(Adv.MSS.22.4.II, ff. 38–9)

with Colin Macfarquhar and Andrew Bell over the form the *Britannica* would take, from the moment he was hired to edit and compile the encyclopaedia for a £200 stipend.

Their increasingly rancorous disagreements found a public airing in the periodical press as early as 1766, with Smellie using his own paper, the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* as well as the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, first to propose an encyclopaedia in octavo that would require many more numbers to complete than the eventual quarto format, and later in 1769 to confront critics who disagreed with his emphasis on the natural sciences and disliked his essaistic style. Those who criticised the editor for the *Britannica*'s densely detailed entry on Anatomy, Smellie dismissed in newspaper articles as people who mistook the *Britannica* for 'only a bookseller's jobb [*sic*], a servile imitation of other dictionaries'. Smellie saw in the *Britannica* an opportunity to generate almost endless numbers that would make available to a socially inclusive readership the best of contemporary learning in an inexpensive octavo format. His stubbornness in pursuing his own agenda caused constant delays in the publication of the early numbers and more than a little unevenness in coverage. These problems and the public wrangling over format and content no doubt contributed to the relative failure of the *Britannica*'s first edition, now a very rare book in its complete three volumes. Rarer still is the 1773 London edition (ABS.8.200.09). Sold by John Donaldson, this London *Britannica* was nothing more than the unsold sheets of the earlier Edinburgh edition, furnished with a new Preface and Donaldson's imprint. That Preface is,

perhaps, the most fascinating thing about the London edition; written by William Smellie, it is more than twice the length of the original and argues closely for Smellie's notion that scientific knowledge is most useful when 'exhibited entire' and that treatises and systems make learning inaccessible for the general reader. The Preface also displays Smellie's hallmark tendency toward satire and parody in its dismissive critique of other contemporary dictionaries, especially the work of Ephraim Chambers.

Throughout his printing career, Smellie continued to take an active part in selecting and editing texts and promoting new authors, often at his own expense. He spent several years collecting subscriptions and rewriting William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*. Comparing Buchan's original proposal with Smellie's revision of it which he printed in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* (3 June 1767), we see how extensively Smellie reconceived the work and how far his style displaced Buchan's. The book is better for Smellie's rewriting but after the first edition in 1769, which bears Smellie's imprint, the text passed to other printers and publishers, along with the extraordinary profits it would accrue in its many subsequent editions.

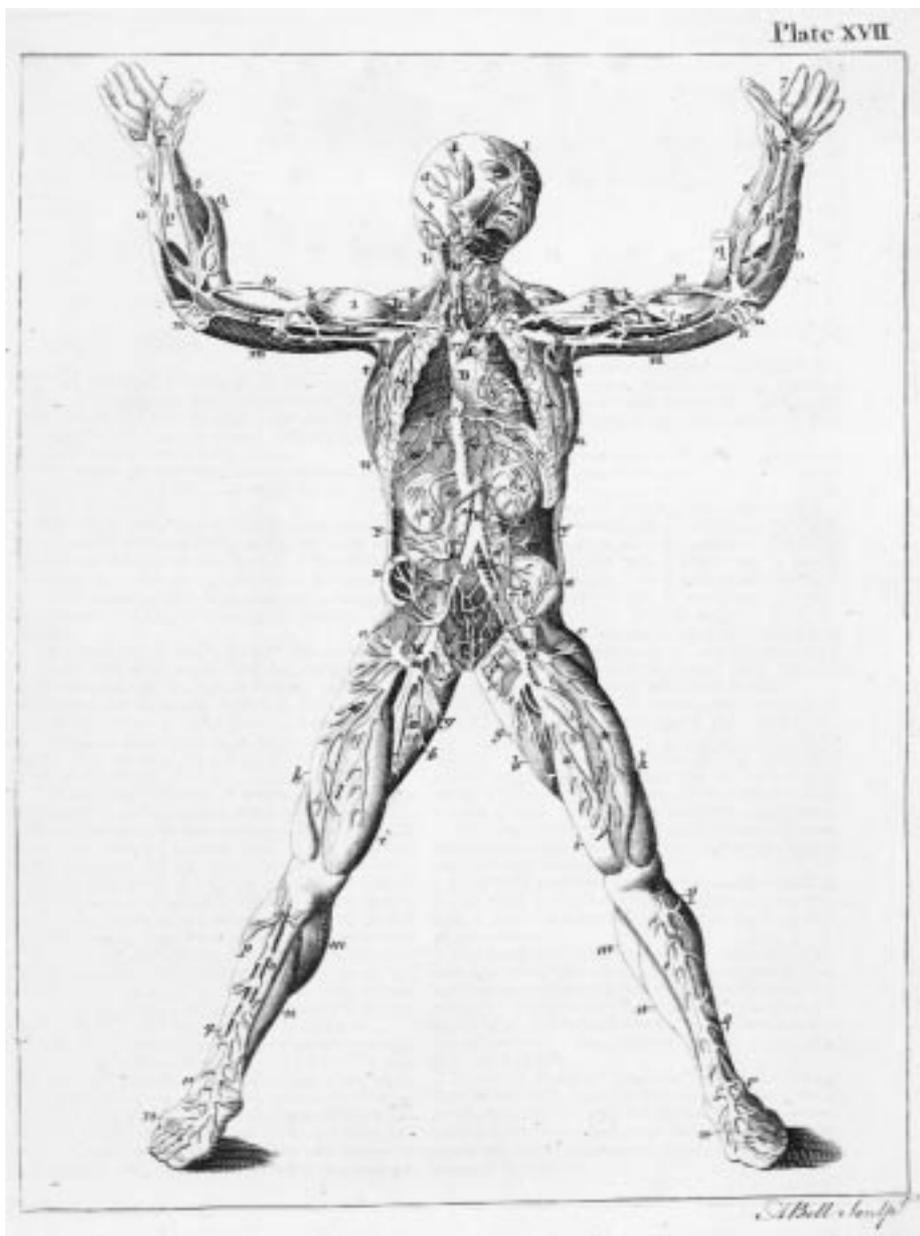
Over the years, Smellie brought a number of other important works to the attention of publishers by first editing and issuing them under his own imprint, including the first editions of Dalrymple's *Remarks on the History of Scotland* (1773) (ABS.1.80.285(1)), the *Thesaurus Medicus* (1778–79), and Arnot's *Celebrated Criminal Trials* (1785). He also took a great interest in the first projects of many novice authors, substantially rewriting before printing Malcolm McCoig's proposal for a *Flora Edinburgensis* (1788), John Taylor's

Medical Treatise on the Virtues of St Bernard's Well (1790) (Nha.O180(8)), and Maria Riddell's *Voyages to the Madeira and Leeward Caribbean Isles* (1792) (K.182.f).

Smellie's most interesting risk as a printer came posthumously, under the direction of his son, Alexander. Smellie was a close friend of Robert Burns, having printed the Edinburgh edition of his poems for William Creech and introduced Burns to the Crochallan Fencibles, a drinking and debating club. At his death in 1795, Smellie possessed an extensive collection of bawdy correspondence with Burns, which Smellie's biographer Robert Kerr subsequently destroyed in 1811. It is a fair conjecture that among that correspondence were letters containing the obscene songs which Burns had addressed to Smellie for circulation among the Crochallans. *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* was printed in 1799 (Mf.1059) at the same time that Alexander Smellie was sorting through and printing all of his father's unpublished manuscripts, and it is not inconceivable that Alexander might have thrown off Burns's songs, either alone or in collusion with the bookseller Peter Hill. Certainly, no printing firm in Edinburgh has a greater claim to the *Merry Muses* than William Smellie's company in the Anchor Close.

As a printer, James Tytler shared Smellie's commitment to the democratisation of learning but he never achieved Smellie's status in the trade. Tytler operated in the netherworld of Edinburgh publishing, issuing his own titles from a homemade press at Restalrig. Tytler had been trained as a surgeon, served on a whaling ship, worked as an apothecary, and made the first ascent by balloon in Scotland. He drew on all these experiences as editor and contributor to the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1776–84). But Tytler also wrote and printed a wide range of works of general knowledge in cheap editions. His *Essays on the Most Important Articles of Natural and Revealed Religion* (Ry.1.4.80), *The Doctrine of Assurance Considered, A General History of All Nations, Ancient and Modern* (RB.S.1386), and *The Universal Voyager* were all printed by Tytler and his son George on a press built with parts Tytler had scavenged from around Edinburgh. These publications were intended for the town's literate tradesmen and issued in small runs in the 1770s and 1780s.

Considering the quality of Tytler's press and his lack of formal training as a



An illustration showing the blood vessels from the Anatomy section of the first London imprint of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, London, 1773.

printer, the work he threw off is surprisingly competent. The inking is predictably uneven, the type often irregular and broken, but compositor's errors are few. Tytler's achievements as a printer testify clearly to the burgeoning market for learning in late-eighteenth-century Edinburgh, among even the poorer labouring classes.

But Tytler, like Smellie, did some of his best work as a journalist, single-handedly producing weekly and monthly reviews, aimed at women and a lower-class readership. Tytler worked for a series of printers but had his strongest ties with William Auld, John Mennons, and William Darling. His earliest effort, the *Gentleman and Lady's Weekly Magazine* (1774–75) is notable for its lively theatre reviews, but his later work, especially the *Weekly Mirror* (1780–81), became increasingly political and

controversial. By 1791, Tytler had linked up with Cornelius Elliot to publish the *Historical Register*, a 48-page monthly which assumed a radical posture. Tytler devised a number of schemes to promote the *Register*, of which the most remarkable was his offer to anyone purchasing the eleventh number for May 1792, of a free copy of Thomas Paine's *Letter to the Right Honourable Mr Secretary Dundas* (2.316(20)). The Library has a copy of the issue in original blue wrappers, bound together with Paine's pamphlet. Printed on the blue covers are two satires, one of Henry Dundas, the other of the slave trade. It is a fine and rare example of the extreme measures taken by some Edinburgh printers in their opposition to the government.

The *Historical Register* was Tytler's journalistic triumph. It sold out monthly, was picked up in London, and the newspapers regularly advertised reprints of the most popular numbers, an

uncommon practice in the periodical trade. Tytler became the first Scottish printer indicted under the new seditious writings act after he wrote and self-published the broadside, *To the People and their Friends* (ABS.10.203.01(006)) in December 1792, but it was the *Historical Register* which first brought Tytler to the Lord Advocate's attention. Smellie and Tytler shared a common background as freemasons and radical protestants, Smellie coming from a Cameronian family, and Tytler becoming a Glasite as a young man. Their resolute self-dependence and commitment to intellectual ideals is indicative of much of the late-eighteenth-century Edinburgh book trade, which seemed to express in secular ways the Covenanters' paradoxical embodiment of loyal dissent. And that may be the most distinctive characteristic of many of Enlightenment Edinburgh's printers, a belief that only the intellectual independence of a self-determining free press could unite Scots as a nation. In some ways, Edinburgh's book trade brought about that national unity, if only as a product of print.

Note on sources

The rarest materials among the Library's sources on Edinburgh printing and publishing, are the first edition of Dr William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine* (1769) (BCL.D2945), edited and printed by Smellie; the first Edinburgh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (EB.1), edited and compiled by Smellie and the London edition (1773) (EB.3) for which Smellie wrote a new and unusual Preface; the only extensive run of Smellie and Auld's *Edinburgh Weekly Journal* (GIVB.2/54(7)); the various works of James Tytler printed on his home-made press (these are listed in the article and all available in the North Reading Room); and very importantly a rare copy of Tytler's politically radical *Historical Register* (1791–92) (ABS.4.87.9(1–2)) in original blue wrappers and bound together with Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Letter to the Right Honourable Mr Secretary Dundas* (2.316(20)), which was given free with the periodical. One other very rare and important National Library source is a Dublin edition of Burns's *Merry Muses* (RB.s.2046), based on the original Edinburgh edition, which was very possibly printed by Smellie's son Alexander from his father's since destroyed manuscript correspondence with Burns. The William Smellie manuscripts are deposited in the archives of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in the Royal Museum of Scotland.

Hume in Paris

Le bon David and Guid Auld Uncle Davie

It was the proverbial hot summer afternoon. The atmosphere in the office was soporific. The battered volume on my desk was not the most exciting document I had ever seen, but it would come to the Library as a donation if I thought it suitable for the national collection. The owner had picked it up in a London street during the Blitz and now, all these years later, wanted it to find a home in Scotland. The inscription 'R.E. Erskine' and the date '1829' were the only indications of original ownership. The book had all the characteristics of a lady's autograph album, containing numerous signatures cut from letters, but also more substantial documents, some of these of Scottish interest, certainly, and some not entirely without significance. From time to time there were hands I recognised, and a name or two I could put in context. But then there were all those terribly dull cut signatures ... I turned another page. Not even the four o'clock tedium of an oppressively close and somnolent June afternoon could stifle my excitement at what I now saw; for here was a hand I knew very well indeed! The paper before me, though unsigned, had been written by none other than David Hume.

One of the greatest of all Scotsman, and a towering figure of European thought, Hume was, of course, a leader of the Scottish Enlightenment. At the time of the album's arrival in the Library, I was serving on the David Hume Commemoration Committee of the Saltire Society, and we were raising funds to pay for the statue we had commissioned from Alexander Stoddart. I had, in fact, recently composed the lapidary text for the statue's plinth: 'Philosopher and Historian. Scot and European. Man of the Enlightenment.' The record of that period of remarkable intellectual ferment is of major concern to the Manuscripts Division of the National Library. I was also deeply conscious that Hume had once been Keeper of the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, that historic institution upon the splendid collections of which the National Library was established, and which underpins our present position as a major research library of international reputation. Hume had described the Keepership as 'a genteel office, though of

IAIN GORDON BROWN

As the major world centre for Hume scholarship, the National Library of Scotland has an unparalleled collection of the great Enlightenment philosopher's manuscripts. Among documents written by David Hume himself is one acquired relatively recently dating from 1775. It contains advice to his nephew Josey, who is about to embark on his first visit to Paris. Here, Iain Gordon Brown recalls the excitement of the moment when he discovered the document in a scrapbook of unrelated items.

small revenue', but it was nevertheless one that afforded him 'the Command of a large Library' and thus was of invaluable advantage to him in his own literary labours. It was Hume who instigated a policy of buying works by contemporary European writers, though

Ninewells House, David Hume's family house in Berwickshire. From *Histories of Noble British Families* by Henry Drummond, 1846. (S.300.a)

this was to lead to his censure by the Faculty's Curators on account of his acquisition of what were deemed to be salacious French books. Hume famously resigned on this issue in 1757. However his name and reputation lived on, and over the years the National Library has become the major centre for Hume scholarship as a result of the amassing of a remarkable collection of manuscripts of the philosopher: letters, literary fragments, proofs, suppressed but annotated versions of printed works, the correspondence of his circle and, above all, the peerless Hume Papers, deposited by the Royal Society of Edinburgh, which have a family provenance. These papers include a wonderful assemblage of letters, not only of Hume himself, but also of those addressed to him by some of the greatest personalities of *le siècle des lumières*, among them Adam Smith, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Benjamin Franklin. The document in the Erskine album (apparently wholly unrelated to its other contents, and probably pasted in simply as an intriguing relic of a great man), would therefore be joining a collection of supreme importance and distinction. We accepted the proffered donation with gratitude and enthusiasm.

The discovery of a new Hume document, unknown and previously unpublished, is not an everyday occurrence. A full transcription appears for the first time below. It has to be admitted that, were it not by Hume, and



did it not refer to a city dear to his heart and to a time of great significance in the life of an extraordinary individual, the paper would not merit great attention. Perhaps it might merely rank as a minor curiosity in the literature of British travel in the age of the Grand Tour. It takes the form of a memorandum for his nephew, Joseph (Josey), son of his elder brother John, on how the young man should conduct himself in Paris: where to lodge; how to handle money; what clothes to order; at what hour to call upon the Comtesse de Boufflers; what salons to attend; how often to try to gain admission to the best levées: all is thought of and set down concisely. In his role as kindly uncle, Hume clearly draws upon his own intimate knowledge of French manners and customs; and in writing these brief travelling instructions for his kinsman, he must surely have recalled with intense pleasure his own astonishing sojourn in Paris some ten years earlier, when unparalleled adulation had been showered upon *le bon David*. It is in these contexts that the document must be analysed and its significance fully exploited.

DIRECTIONS TO THE CORNET

I would have you drive to the Hotel de Tours, Rue Paon, Fauxbourg St Germain, as a Creditable Place at which I have known several of my Friends to lodge. Enquire the Price of Apartments before you fix on any. The Landlord will provide you with a Valet de place; and you may probably dine every day at the Table d'hote in good Company enough.

Go presently to your Banker: If he be either Sir John Lambert, or Selwin or Neckre please make my Compliments to him. He will probably recommend a proper Taylor to you: If not, your Landlord at the hotel will. Make a genteel uniform presently; and divert yourself at the Theatre, and seeing sights, till it be ready.

Then wait on the Countess Dowager of Boufflers, in the Forenoon but not very early, on whom you are chiefly to depend for Recommendations to the Governor of the Province and the Governor of the Town of Metz.

If she be not in Town, leave my Letter with your own Card, containing your Direction; and say, that you will call a day or two after: Do so, till you see her or hear from her.

On leaving her, drive to Monsr. Trudaine de Montigni, for he lives in the same Quarter of the Town: Leave in the same manner my Letter and your own Direction, if he be not at home.

Make your Valet de place ask at M.



Engraving of David Hume by S.C. Miger from a drawing by C.N. Cochin, made in 1764 when Hume was living in his beloved Paris.

Trudaine's House for the house of Madame Dupré de St Maur: It is very near; but I have forgot the Name of the Street. Act in the same manner.

Drive next to Baron d'Holbach's. Act in the same manner: make your Valet de place remark all the Houses, that you may know how to return to them; and for greater Security copy the backs of all these letters in your Pocket Book. You must return every two or three days, till you see them or hear from them, if they be in Town.

If the Countess de Boufflers give your Recommendations to the two Governors, you may chiefly insist with the other Persons on having a Recommendation to some other Officer at Metz, who may take you under his Protection, and settle you agreeably.

Hume was never very free with his introductions. Paris and its society, in the present and in happy memory, were important to him. Josey was evidently worth bothering about, on his own account and for the sake of kinship. One may contrast his case with that of an oafish Scottish colonel of whom Hume wrote to Hugh Blair, 'As to the ridiculous Idea of Foreigners [the Frenchified Hume means those at home in Scotland] that I might introduce him to the good Company of Paris, nothing can be more impracticable: I know not one Family to which I could present such a man, silent, grave, awkward, speaking ill the Language, not distinguishd by any Exploit or Science or Art: Were the French Houses open to such People as these they would be very little agreeable ... No people are more scrupulous of

receiving Persons unknown; and I should soon lose all Credit with them, were I to prostitute my Recommendations of this Nature.' Such a traveller should be dispatched to a provincial town, 'where People are less shy of admitting new Acquaintance, and are less delicate Judges of Behaviour' (MS.23151, no. 7).

Hume's love of France dated from the mid-1730s when, after a brief spell in Paris, he spent more than three years in provincial towns in Champagne and Anjou, peacefully working on his *Treatise of Human Nature*. By 1741 he had been able to epitomise the attraction of the country and its people: '... in common life, they have, in a great measure, perfected that art, the most useful and agreeable of any, *l'Art de Vivre*, the art of society and conversation.'

More active acquaintance with the great world was to follow. In succeeding years, despite the vicissitudes of war and politics, Hume entertained the idea, however nebulous, of retiring to France 'to trifle out my old age, near a warm sun in a good climate, a pleasant country, and amidst a sociable people'. Later, unsolicited correspondence with the Comtesse de Boufflers, mistress of the Prince de Conti, an intense epistolary intercourse soon to evolve into what can only be described as a postal flirtation, caused him to doubt his fitness ('rusted amid books and study') for closer encounters with metropolitan French society. But, unexpectedly appointed Secretary to the British Ambassador to Paris, Hume was to serve there, latterly as *chargé d'affaires*, from 1763 to 1766. In his short autobiography *My Own Life*, he alleged that he was diffident of accepting lest 'the Civilities and gay Company of Paris would prove disagreeable to a Person of my Age and Humour', but confessed that 'those who have not seen the strange Effect of Modes will never imagine the Reception I met with ... from Men and Women of all Ranks and Stations. The more I recoiled from their excessive Civilities, the more I was loaded with them.' The prophesy of John Stewart, his wine-merchant friend, that Hume would receive a welcome commensurate with his literary reputation was more than fulfilled. Stewart's letter of 1759 (MS.23157, no.49) specifically mentioned as Hume's admirers persons whom the philosopher was later to recommend to Josey: Alléon Dupré de St Maur, 'a woman of fortune, fashion and great good sense', and Jean-Charles-Philibert Trudaine de Montigny, who had translated Hume's *Natural History*

Directions to the Count.

Rue Paon

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Go presently to your Banker: If he be either Mr. John Lambert, or Selwyn or Necker please make my Compliments to him. He will probably recommend a ~~particular~~ proper Taylor to you: If not, your Landlord at the Hotel will make a gentle uniform provision, and divert yourself at the Theatre, and seeing Fights, till it be ready.

Then wait on ~~the~~ the Countess Dowager of Boufflers, in whom you are chiefly to depend for Recommendations to the Governor of the Province and the Governor of the Town of Metz.

If she be not in Town, leave my Letter with your own Card, containing your Direction, and say, that you will call a day or two after: Do so, till you see her or hear from her.

Above and facing page (first published in full here): David Hume's memorandum for his nephew Joseph Hume, advising him of places to visit and contacts in Paris. (Acc.11353)

of Religion, and who balanced a career in finance and French national civil engineering administration with a love of letters. If Madame Dupré was the first of Hume's cultured female French admirers, none of these bluestockings was to be more important to him than Marie-Charlotte-Hippolyte de Campet de Saujeon, Comtesse de Boufflers-Rouverel, truly the mistress of his intellect, if nothing else. With Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach, likewise recommended to Josey, she was a leader of intellectual Paris society; and at their salons philosophers were kings. What Hume wrote of d'Holbach's house may be applied to all these leaders of taste and society to whom he would later direct young Josey: it was 'a common receptacle for all men of letters and ingenuity'. Hume had lived in the Faubourg Saint-Germain on the *Rive Gauche*, a district synonymous with aristocratic high fashion, and he was equally at home in

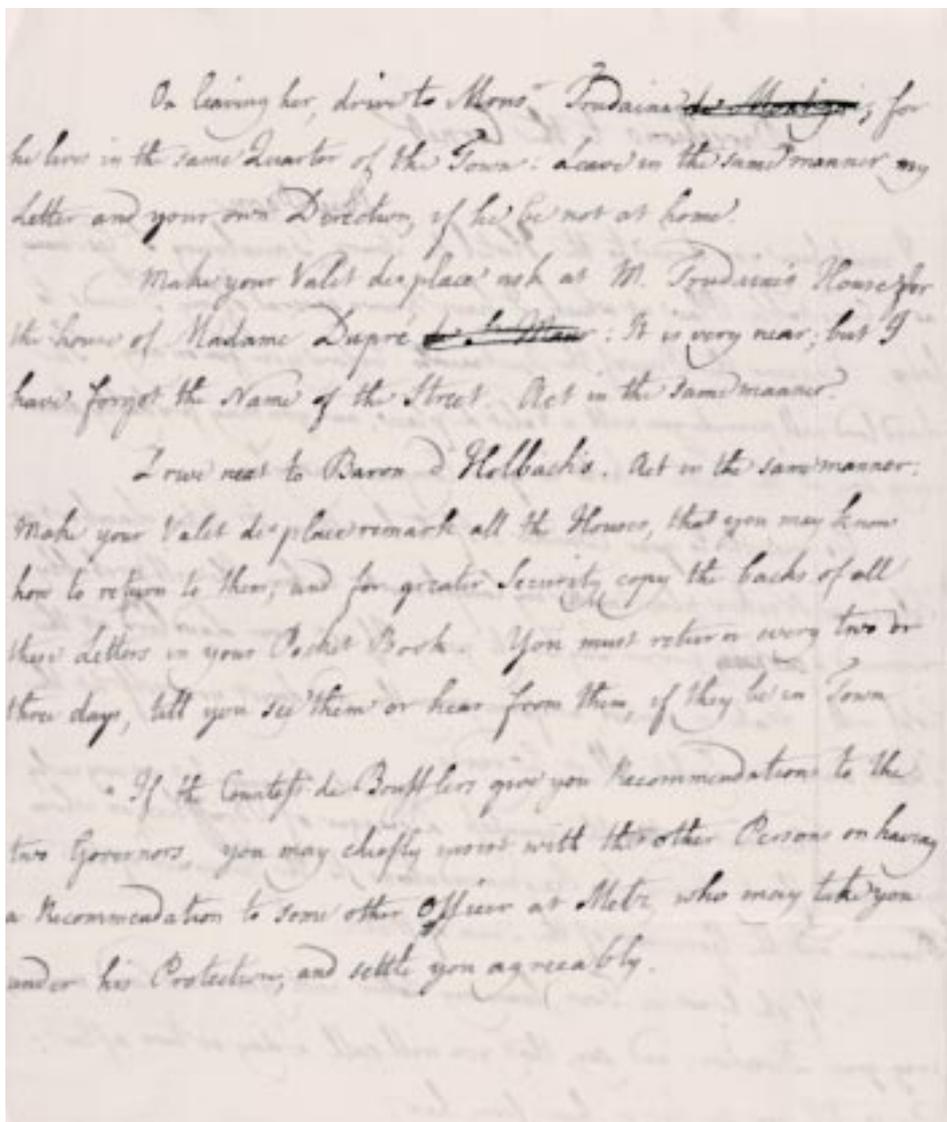
the similarly *bon chic bon genre* (as they might now be called) neighbourhoods of the *Rive Droite*. Subsequently the Comtesse de Boufflers had wanted him to live very near her in the Temple. When Josey was recommended to lodgings it was to a less exclusive part of the city nearer to the *Quartier Latin*, though the rue Paon, adjacent to the still-existing Cour de Rohan, has disappeared under Haussmann's Boulevard Saint-Germain.

No man of letters was ever more spectacularly received than David Hume. At Versailles the infant royal children mumbled their greetings and compliments. Madame de Pompadour flattered him at Fontainebleau. Scottish acquaintances exchanged gossip on the 'incense offered up' in worship to their friend, the 'Idol of Gaul'. Reported 'civilities', 'attention', 'approbation', 'caresses', 'effusions' and 'panegyrics' litter Hume's letters. To William Robertson he wrote: 'I can only say, that I eat nothing but Ambrosia, drink nothing but Nectar, breathe nothing but Incense, and tread on nothing but

Flowers. Every Man I meet, and still more every Lady, would think they were wanting in the most indispensable Duty, if they did not make me a long & elaborate Harangue in my Praise' (MS.3942,f.54). Paris became 'the best Place in the World', the Scottish philosopher a true Parisian. He was the darling of the fair, the man in vogue in what he insisted to Adam Smith was the most agreeable town in Europe, 'the Center of Arts, of Politeness, of Gallantry, and of good Company'. He began to confess to a 'Taste for Idleness & Follies at my Years', and at Paris those follies were so much more agreeable than elsewhere. London, by contrast, was inhabited by barbarians, and there Scotsmen were hated. Edinburgh still held its attractions, but he was inclined to remain ever afterwards in France. Adam Smith scoffed at his light-headedness. Sir Gilbert Elliot smirked at the vanity that was owing to the attentions of 'the French Ladys as much as the French Philosophers'.

But it was indeed to Edinburgh that Hume retired, and it was in his house there that, in 1773, his reprobate nephew Josey came to live, like a prodigal, to collect (as his uncle put it) some wit before he visited foreign countries, and to do penance for past misdemeanours which had sorely tried an uncle almost 'run out of Breath with railing'. From at least 1763 David Hume, childless and (for a man of letters, then or now) rich, had assumed responsibility for the education of his nephew. Adam Ferguson, writing from Edinburgh to Hume in Paris, described Josey as 'a very amiable boy with quick parts' (MS.23155, no.24). Hume favoured an English education for the boy as he grew older, with all the perceived advantages that might offer, chief among them being the suppression of his Scotticisms – a near-obsession among men of 'politeness' in eighteenth-century Scotland – and the acquisition of an English accent which might 'open him the Road of Ambition'. Josey, of whom his uncle was clearly fond, appears a somewhat paradoxical character, by turns able and deficient. 'The Presence of Strangers', Hume told the boy's father in 1767, 'seems to make him recollect himself, and he is exceedingly taking among them. His Address in particular is remarkably good, and he seems to have a Turn for the World and for Company.'

However, hopes that Josey might 'make at least a very Gentleman like Scholar' were disappointed, and he proved increasingly 'dissipated and idle'. The Army therefore beckoned, and Hume



purchased for him a commission in a smart cavalry regiment. Service in England might tend at least to the improvement of his speech and pronunciation. Hume (who had himself once worn ‘the uniform of an officer’ when Secretary to General James St Clair during an expedition against the coast of France and subsequently on a military embassy to Vienna and Turin), continued to exercise his ‘function of an uncle in giving advice’. He now expatiated knowledgeably upon military manners and regimental customs, but half-promised and half-threatened that most of his powers that way he would reserve for ‘a better occasion’. But ‘quick parts’ other than those praised by the two Edinburgh philosophers were to lead Josey into trouble; for Hume soon had to exercise his avuncular advice, tempered always by tactful understanding and sympathy, in supporting the young man through an attack of venereal disease and its unpleasant cure.

The good Uncle David continued to pay Josey’s expenses and mess bills, and bought him further promotion in the Dragoon Guards. In 1775 it was decided

that the young officer should make a prolonged visit to France ‘for his improvement in the language and in his profession’. He was to spend some months in the garrison town of Metz. Again, Hume was paymaster. Jacques Necker, a Swiss banker and reassuringly Protestant, was suggested as a man to look after Josey’s cash. Hume was endearingly vain in this respect, for Necker, as Louis XVI’s *directeur général des finances* in the years before the Revolution, would very soon have a charge rather greater than Cornet Hume’s holiday spending money. He also determined to smooth the way for Josey by writing in advance to the Comtesse de Boufflers. That he should do so to this influential, intelligent and cultivated woman, whose friendship and opinion he so greatly valued, indicates both his confidence in his nephew’s native abilities and his sense of family ties. ‘He has,’ wrote Hume to the Comtesse, ‘as you will see, an agreeable figure; and if he could speak the language, his behaviour and conversation is very good; so that I doubt not but he

will be acceptable to the good company of the place ... He will be so little time at Paris, and speaks the language so imperfectly, that I dare not recommend him to your more particular notice, though I am persuaded you would like him very much, upon further acquaintance. He is a piece of a scholar too, and passes for a prodigy of learning in his regiment.’

Hume’s hopes for the encounter cannot have been entirely wasted, for he appears subsequently to have become concerned by Josey’s protracted sojourn in Paris. The young man returned to his uncle in Edinburgh to find the philosopher on his deathbed. According to Joseph Black, writing to Adam Smith, the peace of Hume’s last days were disturbed by shock at Josey’s appearance (further dangerous liaisons, perhaps, with Venus – as the eighteenth century would have put it – and consequent dependence upon Mercury?), and David became ‘fatigued with the Stir and Noise which his living in the House occasioned’. Five days before he died Hume took final leave of the Comtesse de Boufflers in a letter in which he thought only of her future. ‘I see death approach gradually,’ he wrote, ‘without any anxiety or regret. I salute you, with great affection and regard, for the last time.’

Note on sources

The memorandum for Joseph Hume is to be found in Acc.11353. The Hume Papers deposited by the Royal Society of Edinburgh are MSS.23154–64. The letters in these manuscripts form the core of *The Letters of David Hume*, edited by J.Y.T. Greig, two volumes (Oxford 1932) (X.194.c). This is to be supplemented by *New Letters of David Hume*, edited by R. Klibansky and Ernest C. Mossner (Oxford 1954). Many quotations in this article are taken from these sources. ‘David Hume: some unpublished letters’, edited by Geoffrey Hunter, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, II (1960), pp. 127–50 (X.170.b) prints letters relating to Joseph, some of which are quoted here. The manuscripts of these letters have recently come to the Library (Acc.11927). For all its imperfections the standard biography remains E.C. Mossner, *The Life of David Hume*, second edition (Oxford 1980) (H3.98.2516). In its day, Mossner’s *The Forgotten Hume. Le bon David* (New York 1943, reprinted Bristol 1990) was pioneering (H3.90.4223). Howard C. Rice, *Thomas Jefferson’s Paris* (Princeton 1976) (H8.77.47) is an agreeable interpretation of one great man’s time in a great city.

Molten Sapphires, Moments that Speak

Margaret Oliphant's Journals

Two modest journals of jottings, opening with a scored out entry for 1849 and resumed over ten years later, constitute the autobiography of Margaret Oliphant. The non-linearity of the text, in which sequences of retrospection are frequently interrupted as current diary entries break through, invests it with a contemporary quality that is notably at variance with the conventions of the popular three-decker Victorian novel, one of her specialities. *The Autobiography and Letters of Mrs M.O.W. Oliphant*, arranged and edited by her niece Janet ('Denny') Oliphant and her cousin Annie Coghill, was published by William Blackwood and Sons in 1899 (HP2.89.4066). The text, which had been abridged and reordered by her niece, was finally published in its original powerful form by Oxford University Press in 1990, edited by Elisabeth Jay.

The notebooks chart the life of a spirited, resourceful woman who experienced a series of bereavements that fell like 'hammer blows'. Margaret Oliphant was born on 4 April 1828 in Wallyford, Midlothian. Her family moved to Edinburgh and then to Glasgow and Liverpool, where she wrote her first novel aged only sixteen. Among her autobiographical notes are cameos of her youth in an introverted, lower middle-class household. There were few visitors and few excursions, in line with her father's dourly antisocial attitude. Her mother, who summed up her husband's side of the family as 'vitriol and vinegar', was vivacious, quick in temper and undemonstratively affectionate. As Oliphant records: 'She was of the old type of Scottish mothers ... not caressing, but I know I was a kind of idol to her ...' Looking back on their very close relationship she says that she finds it virtually impossible to achieve the distance necessary to provide an objective picture:

How little one realises the character or individuality of those who are most near and dear. It is with difficulty even now that I can analyse or make a character of her. She herself is there, not any type or variety of humankind. She was taller than I am, not so stout as I have grown. She had a sweet fresh complexion, and a cheek so soft that I can feel the sensation of putting mine against it still, and beautiful liquid brown



ANNE SCRIVEN

Born in Wallyford, Midlothian in 1828, Margaret Oliphant became one of the most prolific novelists of the nineteenth century. Through force of circumstance, she found herself obliged to fend single-handed for her family. Writing was her sole source of income, and she had hardly a moment to call her own. Here, Anne Scriven discusses how Oliphant's autobiography reveals the inner workings of the writer's mind.

eyes, full of light and fun and sorrow and anger, flashing and melting, terrible to look at sometimes when one was in disgrace.

Oliphant declares that her mother, who was 'all in all' in her early formation, had inspired in her a 'gift of narrative' (matched, in her opinion, only by Jane Welsh Carlyle). Her mother's creative legacy also imbued in her a deep familiarity with the oral rhythms of her birth country and she passed on to her daughter her knowledge of the Scottish ballad tradition. As Willa Muir argues in *Living With Ballads* (1965)

Above: Margaret Oliphant (aged twenty-five) and her mother. (MS.23211/50)

(NG.1175.g.5), the figure of the mother weaving domestic magic is a dominant ballad motif possibly deriving 'from an older tradition, a climate of belief left in the air by the matriarchal Picts'. Women do not only figure as characters but also as performers: Lady Wardlaw, Jean Elliot, Lady Anne Lindsay, Lady Nairne and Alison Cockburn were at the heart of what Oliphant calls 'this little concert of songs'. These 'ladies of the best blood and breeding', as she described them in *The Literary History of England* (1882), were not the only ones: in her *Life of Edward Irving* (1862) (TT.1/3), she emphasised how servant women, at the other end of the social scale, kept the oral tradition alive with their currency of supernatural tales. As the great ballad collector Francis James Child observed, women from all walks of life – 'the spinsters and the knitters in the sun, and the free maids that weave their thread with bones' – were 'keepers' of the ballad tradition.

Oliphant's autobiographical writings reveal the extent to which her interior reality differs from a surface presentation of indomitable competence. In a spidery hand that is sometimes difficult to decipher, she confides her anguish as, one after another, her six children die – three in infancy, her daughter Maggie at the age of ten, and her two remaining sons, 'Tiddy' and 'Cecco', in their early thirties. Sincerely religious, she recounts her struggle to reconcile her experience with the idea of a benign saviour, speculating that posterity will not realise the extent to which she has 'rebelled and groaned under the rod'. Margaret Oliphant, who experienced so many dark nights of the soul, generally showed remarkable courage in the face of adversity; she frequently summed up her philosophy of life in Lady Grisell Baillie's words, 'werena my heart licht I wad dee'. However, the final words of the second volume of her journals are set down in two stark lines:

And now here I am all alone.
I cannot write any more.

In fact Oliphant did write more, indeed she wrote right up until the day of her death some years later. But her autobiography contains the 'ballad' of her life story, her 'human story in all its chapters'. The death of her last surviving child

Margaret Oliphant on the steps of her house in Windsor, 1870. Left to right: sons Cecco and Cyril and nephew Frank Wilson. (MS.23211/51)



Right: Sepia portrait of Margaret Oliphant. (MS.23211/53)



brings the ‘death’ of the ‘performer’:

What does it matter? Nothing at all now – never anything to speak of. At my most ambitious of times I would rather my children had remembered me as their mother than in any other way, and my friends as their friend. I never cared for anything else. And now that there are no children to whom to leave any memory, and the friends drop day by day, what is the reputation of a circulating library to me? Nothing, and less than nothing ...

David Buchan has argued for the ballad’s ability to ‘manifest itself in many texts’. In the same way I would argue that Oliphant’s original autobiographical writings constitute an extension of the oral form, with the rhythms and traditions of her Scottish childhood very much in evidence (as they are throughout her work). Set down by a highly practised authorial hand, they may be interpreted as a conscious performance in the ballad tradition; despite her grief, the speaker ensures her audience is kept abreast of the detail and flow of events until the tale concludes.

In her published writing, Oliphant’s Scottishness is very evident in her stories of the supernatural: in these she emerges as a true *seannachie*, producing stories rooted in the Scottish folklore tradition but reflective of the mores of Victorian society. In her novels set in Scotland such as *Margaret Maitland* (1849), *Katie Stewart* (1852) (T.219.i), *Effie Ogilvie* (1886) (Vts.91.c.4) and the superb *Kirsteen* (1890), her construction of a distinctive Scottish heroine figure, a woman of smeddum, explores the relationship between Scottish women and their nation. In non-fiction articles

such as ‘Scottish National Character’ (1860), and ‘Scotland her Accusers’ (1861) – held on microfilm in the Library – her construction of a Scottish identity is clearly seen. Indeed, the literary cadences of Scotland are so overt in her writing that on their first meeting, Jane Welsh Carlyle immediately identified her connection to East Lothian. As Oliphant records:

... she had recognised many things in my books which could only come from that district. I had to answer as I have done on various occasions, that my mother had lived for years in East Lothian, and that I could never tell whether it was I myself who remembered things or she.

The more I have immersed myself in Margaret Oliphant’s work, the more I am convinced that a full interpretation of it requires the Scottish dimension. My research has involved many visits to National Library – little of her prodigious output is available elsewhere. Presciently, Oliphant predicted that her lifetime’s work would ‘disappear like the stubble and the hay’.

In 1853, she began a career as a Blackwood’s contributor and for the next forty-five years she wrote predominantly for her beloved ‘Maga’, as well as for a number of other literary journals in Britain and America. She wrote approximately 300 articles, some fifty short stories, twenty-five works of non-fiction and over ninety novels – indeed she wrote so much that she actually wore a groove in the forefinger of her right hand. Continually driven by the need to make a living, she was never granted the ease of mind that an editorship would have given; and, it has to be said, fine

tuning was sometimes sacrificed in order to meet deadlines.

My own first encounter with her writing was a short story, ‘The Library Window’, originally published in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, January 1896. Set in the fictitious ‘St Rule’s’ (a thinly veiled St Andrews), this story tackles issues of female orality and the Scottish literary tradition, and anticipates arguments made by twentieth-century schools of feminist criticism. It is interesting, however, that Oliphant’s statements on the position of the nineteenth-century literary woman are often overlooked or even misread by leading voices of feminist thought. Virginia Woolf, for example, is stinging dismissive of Oliphant’s work, saying in *Three Guineas* (1938) (T.283.g) that it ‘smeared your mind and dejected your imagination’. She moves on then almost in the same breath to concede that Oliphant’s *Autobiography* was ‘a most genuine and moving piece of work.’ Woolf’s initial condemnation is all too ironic considering that Oliphant’s writing often foreshadowed her own.

No reader of Oliphant’s original autobiography could fail to be struck by the arrestingly impressionistic quality of language elicited by certain moments of particular happiness or sadness. On one of her many trips abroad she describes the approach to Marseilles:

... the sunrise upon the new unaccustomed landscape struck me so – ‘the awful rose of dawn’ coming over the wide sweep of the country, the mulberry trees all stripped of their leaves, standing out against the growing light. This seems rather a mingling of pictures; but it is the impression that

The last words written in Margaret Oliphant's journals of autobiography. (MS.23219/88)

remains on my mind and the great silence and the sleeping faces of my companions grey in the rising of the daylight.

Joy in the commonplace, another Woolfian tone, appears when she recalls a 'halcyon' time of harmony and companionship with her husband Frank, delight in her children and energy for work:

When I look back on my life, among the happy moments ... is one which is so curiously common and homely, with nothing in it, that it is strange even to record such a recollection ... It was the moment after dinner when I used to run up-stairs to see that all was well in the nursery, and then to turn into my room on my way down again to wash my hands, as I had a way of doing before I took up my evening work, which was generally needlework, something to make for the children. My bedroom had three windows in it ... I can see it now, the glimmer of the outside lights, the room dark, the faint reflection in the glasses, and my heart full of joy and peace – for what? – for nothing – that there was no harm anywhere, the children well above stairs and their father below. I had few of the pleasures of society, no gaiety at all. I was eight-and-twenty, going down-stairs light as a feather, to the little frock I was making. My husband also gone back for an hour or two after dinner to his work, and well – and the bairns well. I can feel now the sensation of that sweet calm and ease and peace.

I have always said it that in these unconsidered moments that happiness is ...

In January 1859, the family left for Italy and France. Unknown to his wife, Frank had been diagnosed as having terminal tuberculosis. Possibly through a protective impulse, he did not share the news. But as they travelled, she became

increasingly worried about his health. They stopped for the night in a palatial hotel at Alassio, near Nice:

We were taken into a huge room with a shining marble floor ... The mere sight of the place was enough to freeze the tired traveller ... I feel still the chill that went into my heart at the sight of this room, so unfit for [Frank]; but we soon got a blazing fire. I remember kneeling by it, lighting it with the great pine cones, which blazed up so quickly, and all the reflections, as if in water, in the dark polished marble of the floor.

This reflected light imagery is perhaps all the more interesting, given that Frank Oliphant was a stained glass artist. He died in Rome on 20 October 1859.

It came as a tragic shock when, on a return visit to Rome five years later, her daughter Maggie fell ill and suddenly died of gastric fever. The trauma caused everything to be wiped out of Margaret Oliphant's mind, 'except some strange broken scenes'. Especially remarkable here is another intense poetic image describing the 'metallic water' of a lake in north Italy, looking like 'molten sapphires', anticipating Woolf's semiotic language in *The Waves* (1931) (Vts.148.e.19).

The Modernist concentration on the fragmentation of the self continually makes appearance in Oliphant's conscious struggle with her 'self' as mother and as writer. In her autobiography she measures herself against more successful contemporaneous and childless writers, wondering whether she would have 'done better' had she 'been kept', like George Eliot, 'in a mental greenhouse', but concludes that in comparison to Charlotte Brontë, she has had 'a fuller conception of life.'

As both mother and writer, Oliphant was invariably denied 'a room of one's own' as she notes in an entry of 1888:

... the writing ran through everything. But then it was also subordinate to everything, to be pushed aside for any little necessity. I had no table even to myself, much less a room to work in, but sat at the corner of my table with my writing book, with everything going on as if I had been making a shirt instead of writing a book.

She adds, 'I don't think I have ever had two hours undisturbed (except at night, when everyone is in bed) during my whole literary life.'

Between the first and second extended entries in her autobiography there is a gap of twenty-one years. Resuming her efforts to set down further autobiography, she reads through the earlier section and is deeply moved. She remarks, 'Life, though it is very short, is very long, and contains much. And one does not, to one's consciousness, change as one's outward appearance and capabilities do.' Then, reflecting equivocally on her achievements, she all too modestly states: 'I should rather like to forget it all, to wipe out all the books, to silence those compliments about my industry, &c., which I always turn off with a laugh.'

Note on sources

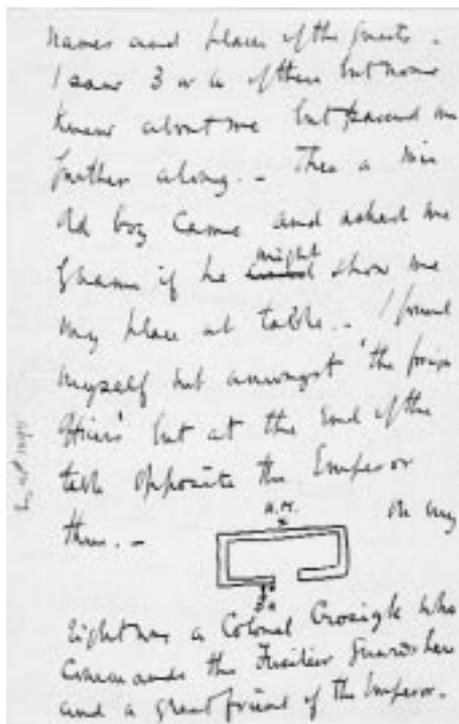
The text of Margaret Oliphant's autobiographical notebooks (MSS.23218/19) was first published in its original form as *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant: The Complete Text*, edited and introduced by Elisabeth Jay (London: Oxford University Press 1990) (H3.90.3282). Elisabeth Jay's biography, *Mrs Oliphant: 'A Fiction to Herself'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) (H3.95.2483) is also available in the Library. For details of Oliphant's correspondence, see the *Catalogue of Manuscripts* Vol. XV (MS.21501–23000), which is also available on microfilm: The Correspondence and Literary Manuscripts of Margaret Oliphant (1828–1897) from the National Library of Scotland (Mf.1065). Some of Oliphant's stories of the uncanny are to be found in *Selected Short Stories of the Supernatural* edited by Margaret King Gray (Scottish Academic Press for the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1985) (N3.86.427). Original editions of many of the periodicals Margaret Oliphant was published in are available in the Library, as are the first published editions of her novels. Her *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons their Magazine and Friends* (ABS.3.90.73) two volumes, Edinburgh, 1897 and 1898, is her enduring tribute to the firm of publishers who supported her throughout her career as a professional writer.

Friends and Foes

Face to Face with the Kaiser

In 1895, seven years after his accession to the Imperial Throne of Germany, Kaiser Wilhelm II entertained, amongst others, a young British Cavalry Officer, Captain Douglas Haig. The lavish dinner took place in Berlin. During this period visits by diplomatic and military personnel of rival states were commonplace; this gave them the opportunity to compare drills, improve tactics and sometimes led to new alliances. On one such mission, Haig went to Germany to carry out research for his paper *Notes on the German Cavalry*, which was published in London in 1896. He had spent the day of 31 May 1895 watching German army exercises and had been invited to a banquet being held that evening by Kaiser Wilhelm II. Evidently thrilled to be in such close proximity to the Kaiser, he drew a diagram of the seating arrangements both in his personal diary for that day and in a letter to his closest sister, Henrietta:

It was von Plessen, the General in Command of the Emperor's Military Household, who got me the invitation – I told you before of him: he is a very nice fellow, and must have taken a lot of trouble



Sketch from a letter dated 31 May 1895 from Haig to his sister Henrietta, expressing his delight at being seated in a place of honour opposite Kaiser Wilhelm II. (Acc.3155/6b)



COLM McLAUGHLIN

The First World War transformed the lives of millions. At the National Library of Scotland are housed many important Great War collections and much remains to be discovered from them. This article focuses on the papers of Earl Haig, Commander in Chief of the British Army on the Western Front 1915–19, and on those of Viscount R.B. Haldane, British Secretary of State for War 1906–12 and Lord Chancellor 1912–15. At different times, both men enjoyed the hospitality of Kaiser Wilhelm II, their future enemy. Colm McLaughlin, whose special responsibility as a curator at the Library is twentieth-century military history, considers their contrasting fortunes in peace and war.

about this business, as you will see from the way I was treated. I went in uniform of course and on reaching the Palace had a big staircase to go up and then through several galleries. In the latter there were court officials with the names and places of the guests. I saw 3 or 4 of them but none knew about me but passed me further along. Then a nice old boy came and asked me by name if he might show me my place at table. I found myself not amongst 'the foreign officers' but at the end of the table

This picture, from a sumptuous photograph album presented by Kaiser Wilhelm II to Viscount R.B. Haldane, British War Minister on 1 November 1906, shows them in Berlin during the annual display manoeuvres of the German army. (MS 20053/4)

opposite the Emperor ... On my right was a Colonel Crosigk who commands the Fusilier Guards here and a great friend of the Emperor. After we had been a certain time at dinner, the Emperor drank his health, then signalled to him that he wished to drink my health – so I stood up and emptied my glass to the Kaiser in the usual style – 'Na'e heeltaps!' He did the same. – These were the only healths H.M. drank except of these quite close to him in the family so to speak – After dinner we went into the picture gallery and the Emperor came and asked me about my regt, ... and what I was anxious to do and the length of leave which I had – Altogether he was most friendly.

In 1895, Haig had yet to experience active service. He had served in India with his Regiment, the 7th Hussars, from 1886 to 1892 and by 1891 had become British Major at the cavalry camp in Aligarh. By the time of his return to Europe he was recognised as an authority on cavalry. In 1893 he attended French Army exercises, his observations being published the following year in his *Report on the French Cavalry Manoeuvres in Tourane*. Given the friendly relations between Britain and Germany, not to mention the close ties by blood and marriage between the German and British royal families, it seemed perfectly unremarkable to repeat the exercise with the German Cavalry in Berlin in 1895. He wrote to Sir Evelyn Wood from Kissingen in Germany on 9 July 1895, 'My time in Berlin was devoted entirely to cavalry work ... I have received so much assistance and kindness from German Officers of all ranks ...' (Acc.3155/6g).

Haig's career prospered in the years that followed. He rose quickly through the ranks, becoming a Captain on leaving Staff College in 1898. In that year he saw active service as a British Army reconnaissance officer, working for the Egyptian Army in the campaign to reconquer the Sudan.

The following incident serves to illustrate the colonial tensions between Britain and Germany. On 11 February

1898, whilst travelling by steamer down the Nile to join his regiment, Haig wrote to Henrietta:

There are about 7 or 8 Germans out of the 32 passengers on board. At dinner one of them sent to have the cabin door shut. Some non-Germans insisted on its remaining open. The Germans at first retaliated, putting up their coat collars, and the lady sent for jackets which she flung vigorously around her expansive shoulders! Many of us laughed and the Germans no doubt ... felt as if they had withdrawn from the concert of the Great Powers. So in due course they will receive a telegram from 'Wilhelm' to congratulate them in supporting his Kolonial Politik and 'mailed hand' theory on the banks of the Nile! (Acc.3155/6b)

East Africa was just one area of rivalry between the British and Germans, and when the Boer War broke out in 1898 the Kaiser sided with the Boers.

After a second tour of duty in India, Haig was called home to assist the new Liberal Secretary of War, Lord Haldane, with Army reforms. In a diary entry for 9 June 1906, he gives us his first impression of Haldane, 'a fat big man but with a kind genial face. One seemed to like the man at once.' Haig was

quickly installed as part of the forty-strong 'Duma', a think-tank whose purpose was to carry through the Army reforms identified as necessary in Haldane's White Paper of July 1906. Entries in Haig's diary (Acc.3155/2f-g) emphasise the closeness of his collaboration with Haldane.

In his memoir *Before the War* (1920), Haldane recalled:

In the event of war ... but still more because of the un-organised condition of the three lines, the Regulars, the Militia and the Volunteers, rapid mobilisation was impossible, and we could not hope to get a force ready to assist the French against the scientific and swift moving arrangements of the German Army. The situation filled me as an inexperienced Secretary of State with much concern, and made me resolve to do everything I could to prevent any friction with Germany which could cause immediate danger ... (R.32.h)

Haldane contrived to perform a difficult balancing act between 1906 and 1912, on the one hand appeasing Germany whilst on the other modernising the structure of the British Army. He instigated the creation of the Territorial Army and the Officer Corps. Throughout his life, Haldane was a lover of German

literature and philosophy. As he reflected in *Before the War*:

Speaking for my own countrymen, I think that neither did we know enough about the Germans nor did the Germans know enough about us. They were ignorant of the innate capacity for fighting, in industrial and military conflicts alike, which our history shows we have always hitherto brought to light in great emergencies. We, on the other hand, knew little of their tradition, their literature, or their philosophy. Our statesmen did not read their newspapers, and rarely visited their country.

Diplomatic connections deteriorated between Great Britain and Germany and both sides engaged in a massive buildup of arms. A series of treaties and alliances emphasised the political fault lines. Britain had entered into an informal alliance with France in 1904, the Entente Cordiale. In 1905, in the face of French protests, the Kaiser provoked the First Moroccan Crisis by entering Tangiers; Russia drew closer to Britain and France and the three joined in the Triple Entente in 1907.

Haldane devoted all his diplomatic expertise to easing the growing international tensions. In August 1906,



'Turned Turtle'. The War Minister. 'A little more of this and Haldane's occupation's gone!' *Punch* cartoon, 21 February 1912, by Bernard Partridge. (X.231.d.)



A German propaganda poster showing losses and gains for the year 1917. From *War Posters Issued by Belligerent and Neutral Nations 1914-1919* by M. Hardie and A.K. Sabin, A. & C. Black, London, 1920. (R.29.a)



Plane crash near Boesinghe, Belgium (Acc.3155/ phot.C2411). 'A slight mishap to one of our machines' is written on the back of the photograph, one of thousands of official war photographs in the Haig Archive. A selection may be viewed at www.nls.uk/experiencesofwar and at www.rls.org.uk (Resources for Learning in Scotland).

he had attended Cavalry manoeuvres in Berlin:

... under the care of the German Government [we] were received at the Anhalter Bahnhof in great state ... the next day the Emperor arrived from Potsdam and presented new colours to his troops. I had my first conversation with him in the open air when he presented me to the Empress and his family ... (MS.6109, f.329)

In the short term, relations between the two countries improved. On Christmas Eve 1906 Haldane's office received from the Kaiser an album of photographs, a unique item now held at the National Library of Scotland. Beautifully bound in highly polished gilded leather, it contained photographs of the cavalry manoeuvres. The accompanying note suggested that the most cordial of relations prevailed.

In 1912, after several years of heightened tension between the 'Alliance' and the 'Entente', Haldane was asked by the Cabinet to undertake a further mission to the Kaiser. On 8 February Haldane travelled to Berlin. His visit was shrouded in mystery, leading to rumours and accusations in the English press as to his motives. While he was in Berlin, Winston Spencer Churchill made a speech in Glasgow condemning the German Naval Race. Later that year, Haldane himself informed the German Foreign Minister, Lichnowsky, that Britain would defend Serbia against Austria. Many historians regard this as the moment the die was cast. The Kaiser called a War Council at Potsdam at which he backed Admiral Turpitz and the War Party; the Naval Race with Britain would now be pursued wholeheartedly. As Haldane commented in *Before the War*:

The great defect of the German Imperial system was that unless the Emperor was strong enough to impose his will on his advisers, he was largely at their mercy ... Thus the Kaiser was constantly being pulled at from different sides, and whichever minister had the most powerful combination at his back generally got the best of the argument.

Haldane was lampooned in *Punch* and came under increasing fire from the British press. With the outbreak of war in 1914, he was vilified in thousands of letters sent to the *Daily Express*. He stated:

What I had done in Berlin [in 1912] and the objects of my efforts throughout were grossly distorted by certain newspapers. Every kind of legend was set abroad regarding me. I had a German wife, I was the illegitimate brother of the Kaiser ... (MS.6109, f.397)

At the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, Haig wrote to Haldane:

What an anxious time you must be having, but what a satisfaction it must be to you to see that this country is able to draw on her vast resources at the moment of crisis as a result of the thought and labour you spent on the problem when you were Secretary of State. (Acc.3155/98, f.38)

In 1915 the barrage of press criticism led to Haldane's dismissal from his post as Lord Chancellor in Asquith's War Cabinet. In contrast, Haig, a rising star, had been appointed Commander in Chief of the British Army on the Western Front. Haldane wrote to him on 2 April 1917, 'I do not forget how you came over from India and threw yourself into the great task wholeheartedly and with surpassing energy'.

For his part, Haig never forgot Haldane's Army reform work, praising

him in the victory dispatches of 1918: 'To Viscount Haldane of Cloan, the greatest War Secretary England ever had, to whom we owe it that we won the war.'

After the war, Haig founded the British Legion and the Earl Haig fund for wounded ex-servicemen. He died in 1928. Haldane regained cabinet office in Ramsay MacDonald's Labour Cabinet in 1924 as Lord Chancellor for the best part of a year. He died in 1928, eight months after Haig.

Kaiser Wilhelm had been forced to abdicate and leave Germany for exile at Doorn in Holland, where he remained until his death in 1941. He lived quietly, sometimes preaching at the local Lutheran Church. He still threw wonderful parties, something that had not changed from the heady days in Berlin and Potsdam (Acc.4171).

The Manuscripts Division of the Library holds a transcript of an interview he gave in 1929 to Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, British diplomat, intelligence officer and journalist (Acc.4171). To Lockhart's question, 'What does your Majesty think about the future relations between England and Germany?' Wilhelm replies, 'I hope that these two great peoples will get to a stage in which they will really understand each other and co-operate in true friendship to the progress of all.'

Note on sources

The Library is the main repository of the papers of Earl Haig (1861–1928), Commander in Chief of the British Army on the Western Front 1915–19. The collection (Acc.3155) includes Haig's personal diaries, starting in his student days, and correspondence from every stage of his life. The diaries cover all the major events of his military career, amongst them the Sudan Campaign of 1898 and the Boer War, 1899–1902. During the First World War, Haig made a diary entry almost every day and the Library possesses both the originals and a typescript version interleaved with photos and memorabilia, which he produced at a later date. Of considerable interest to historians of the First World War are the many field maps and plans showing the positions of combatants throughout the major campaigns. Along with personal photographs there are approximately 4,000 official war photographs taken from 1916 onwards. The part played by Haig during the Great War remains a subject of controversy. If the truth is to be found anywhere, it is in these papers.

Notes on the contributors

AIN GORDON BROWN, Principal Curator of Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland, is a Fellow both of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Society of Antiquaries of London. He has published extensively on many aspects of eighteenth-century culture. An authority on the history of European travel of the period, he is working on a study of Scotland and the Grand Tour. He is the Library's specialist in the fields of seventeenth- to nineteenth-century literary manuscripts and material relating to art, architecture and antiquarianism as well as pre-1900 military history.

STEPHEN BROWN is a professor of English at Trent University, Canada, where he is 3M Teaching Fellow and Master of Champlain College. He collated, edited, and annotated William Smellie's manuscripts for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, has completed a biography of William Smellie and is beginning work on a study of James Tytler. A Fellow of the Centre for the History of the Book at Edinburgh University, he is co-editor of volume two (1707–1800) of *The History of the Book in Scotland*.

COLM McLAUGHLIN, a curator in the Manuscripts Division at the National Library of Scotland, is closely involved in serving the ever-growing interest in twentieth-century military history. The Library is an important centre for First World War research, and as cataloguer of the Haig Papers, Colm McLaughlin often assists military historians and biographers to navigate the vast archive of manuscripts, documents, photographs and printed books. He plays a central role in making these collections accessible to a wider public via the Library's Experiences of War website: www.nls.uk/experiencesofwar.

ANNE SCRIVEN, a former secondary school teacher and editor of a human rights journal, has a long-standing interest in women's writing. Returning to full-time study after bringing up her son, she gained a Diploma in English Studies with distinction. She is now a final-year research student at the University of Strathclyde. Her Ph.D argues for the hitherto uncriticized 'Scottishness' of the Victorian writer Margaret Oliphant. She would like to thank Emily Lyle and Katherine Campbell for an enjoyable blether about the oral ballad tradition.



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NLS diary dates

MAY 2003

'An Elusive Spark'

The National Library of Scotland celebrates Dame Muriel Spark's 85th year with the launch of a travelling display which will be on view in the Entrance Hall of the George IV Bridge Building until 27 May, after which it will tour nationwide.

JUNE–OCTOBER 2003

Wish you were here! Travellers' Tales from Scotland 1540-1960, the Library's summer exhibition, runs from Sunday 1 June to Saturday 31 October 2003. Opening hours: Monday-Friday 10.00-17.00 (Edinburgh Festival Monday-Friday 10.00-20.00); Saturday 10.00-17.00; Sunday 14.00-17.00.

Wish you were here!

(www.nls.uk/wishyouwerehere) explores the changing nature of Scotland and the Scots over four centuries as seen through the eyes of people visiting and travelling in Scotland. Diaries, paintings, drawings, maps, brochures and photographs vividly evoke social history as it was lived. Film – both amateur and professional – provides a visual commentary on holidays in Scotland during the last century. Other exhibits include posters, books, postcards, and a 1930s motorcycle and sidecar.

As Others See Us

How do others view Scotland today? Concurrently with the summer exhibition, a series of evening interviews will feature people from other countries working in Scotland in various fields - the arts, business, conservation, politics, science and sport. They will discuss how they view Scotland and the Scots. (These events are free but ticketed.)

JUNE 2003

Art Fund on Show

To mark the centenary of The Art Fund, items acquired by the Library with its help will be displayed in the Entrance Hall of the George IV Bridge Building; there will also be an evening talk about the work of the fund. (This event is free but ticketed.)

For full information about all events and exhibitions, or to book tickets, please phone 0131-622 4807 or e-mail events@nls.uk.

Evening events are all at 19.00.

In the next *Folio* (Autumn 2003)

AILEEN CHRISTIANSON, a senior lecturer in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh, has been working since 1967 on the Duke-Edinburgh edition of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*. In 'Living with Jane Welsh Carlyle', she will discuss editing the huge ongoing edition with its dual focus on both Carlyles – over sixty per cent of their manuscript archives are in the Library. She will also touch on her own critical journey through Welsh Carlyle's writing and the challenge of assessing her as writer through her 2,000 or so surviving letters.

OLIVE GEDDES of the Library's Manuscripts Division discusses Elsie Jollyman's journal of a caravan tour in the West Highlands of 1909. Interest in such activities had been steadily growing since at least the 1880s, when wealthy health-enthusiasts, attracted by the freedom and fresh air, took up travelling for pleasure in horse-drawn caravans. Olive Geddes, author of *A Swing Through Time: Golf in Scotland, 1457-1743* and *The Laird's Kitchen: Three Hundred Years of Food in Scotland*, is curator of the Library's summer 2003 exhibition, *Wish You Were Here! Travellers' Tales of Scotland*.

ANDREW LOWNIE, John Buchan's most recent biographer and editor of collections of his short stories and poetry, discusses how the Library's holdings significantly enhance our understanding of this complex figure. Buchan's life is expressively documented through its extensive collection of the author's correspondence and that of various members of his family (including his sister Anna, the novelist 'O. Douglas'). Andrew Lownie also highlights insights gleaned from the Blackwood Papers and touches on the research potential of the papers of Janet Adam Smith, a previous biographer of Buchan.

JAMES MCCARTHY describes the several sources and curious coincidences he encountered in writing the biography of the nineteenth-century Edinburgh cartographer and explorer, Keith Johnston, after transcribing his last unpublished expedition diary. The National Library of Scotland's photographic archives provided important illustrative material for this work, but it was the chance finding of papers held privately which revealed not only Johnston's family background, but also an intimate picture of Edinburgh in the mid-Victorian era and the development of geographical science at this time.

Cover: The young Haig as an officer with the 7th Hussars. (Acc. 3155/234)

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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